MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

DIY PUNK FANZINE. ISSUE #278.

A CONVERSATION WITH BILLY CHILDISH

PLUS:
DEATH TOKEN. THE FIRST STEP.
RAMSEY KANAAN OF AK PRESS.
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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS
- CARBONAS-Cold Waste-LP
- CRIMINAL DAMAGE-LP / NO SLOGAN-EP
- TRAGEDY-LP / SLEEPER CELL-Alarm-LP
- FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES-EP
- V/A-America's Unknown-LP & zine
- DARVOCETS-Authentic Music from Another Planet-12"
- THE HORROR-The Fear, the Terror, the Horror-LP
- THE ANXIETIES-The De–Evolution Will Be Televised-EP
- UPSTAB-w/Report-EP / PESD-LP
- CHEAP THRILLS/NERVOUS HABITS-split EP

MITCH CARDWELL
- ANGRY ANGLES-Apparent Transparent-EP
- LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
- EJECTORS-Hydrohead-LP
- KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS-Tommy of the River-EP
- RIVER CITY TANLINES-All 7 Inches Plus 2 More-LP
- BLACK FLAG-Licorice Pizza and More-EP
- MONITORS-Cunt Fusion-EP
- FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES-EP
- HOLY SHIT!-Jazz Phase-EP
- RAT TRAPS-live

ROB COONS
- SLEEPER CELL-Alarm-LP
- SKITSYSTEM-Stigmata-LP
- TRAGEDY-Nerve Damage-LP
- HERMIT PROSE-Down Beats Sec-split EP
- OFFENDERS-We Must Rebel-LP
- CRIMINAL DAMAGE-The Power of Fools-LP
- HAIL OF RAGE-All Hail-LP
- LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
- DEADFALL-Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay-EP
- FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES-EP

PAUL CURRAN
- WITCH HUNT-Blood-Red States-LP
- ACTS OF SEDITION-The Sick Lead the Blind-EP
- CARBONAS-Cold Waste-LP
- CONVERSIONS/WITCHES WITH DICKS-split 7"
- GRUPO SUB-1/WEBELOS-split EP
- NO SLOGAN-No Pasaran-EP
- BENT OUTTA SHAPE/SNUGGLE-split EP
- PRETTY BOY THORSON & THE FALLING ANGELS-EP
- LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
- V/A-America's Unknown-LP & zine

JONATHAN FLOYD
- KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS-Tommy of the River-EP
- CRIMINAL DAMAGE-The Power of Fools-LP
- ANGRY ANGLES-Apparent Transparent-EP
- TRAGEDY-Nerve Damage-LP
- CARBONAS-Cold Waste-LP
- BEAT BUTTONS-Red-LP
- RIVER CITY TANLINES-LP
- BRUTAL KNIGHTS-Terrible Evenings-EP
- THE DUCKY BOYS-The War Back Home-CD
- LA PLEBE-live

CHRIS HUBBARD
- NO SLOGAN-No Pasaran-EP
- CRIMINAL DAMAGE-The Power of Fools-LP
- HONOR ROLE-1982-EP
- LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
- TRAGEDY-Nerve Damage-LP
- PESD-Politikarepoizonekurvae-LP
- SLEEPER CELL-Alarm-LP
- THE BAYONETTES-Dead End Kids/American Song-45
- WITCH HUNT-Blood-Red States-LP
- DEATHCHARGE-The Hangman/New Dark Age-45

KENNY KAOS
- THE HATEPINKS-Ikea Kitchen...-EP
- CHEAP THRILLS/NERVOUS HABITS-split EP
- NEUROTIC SWINGERS-Sexy & Mysterious-LP
- KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS-Tommy of the River-EP
- MUGWUMPS-Slit Your Tire-EP
- CHINESE LUNGS-Get Your Lungs Out!-EP
- RIVER CITY TANLINES-LP
- THE ANXIETIES-EP
- KITTY AND THE MANGES-Joey's Song-EP
- THE NAZI DOGS-Money Taker-EP

CAROLYN KEDDY
- ANGRY ANGLES-Apparent Transparent-EP
- BLANK ITS-Happy Accidents-CD
- CARBONAS-Cold Waste-LP
- LEATHER UPPERS-Bright Lights-CD
- KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS-Tommy of the River-EP
- CHEVEU-Dog/Make My Day-45
- CHEAP THRILLS/NERVOUS HABITS-split EP
- LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
- BRUTAL KNIGHTS-Terrible Evenings-EP
- LA PESTE-Better Off Dead-LP

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BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: #148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 160-163, 166, 172, 174-175, 179-181, 184-210, 214-227, 229-277 **See page 4 for pricing and other info.**

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases to the address on the previous page. See Demos section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

WILL KINSER

ENJOYING DEUTSCHLAND

RAY LUJAN

MENEGUAR-I Was Born at Night-CD
CUT-UPS-CD / CASINO 66-CD
DIGITAL LEATHER-Monologue-LP
THE BAYONETTES-45 / CHINESE LUNGS-EP
PRETTY BOY THORSON & THE FALLING ANGELS-EP
BEAT BUTTONS-LP / KITTY AND THE MANGES-EP
LEVOLUME ETAITTAUMAXIMUM-CD
BOMBSHELL ROCKS-The Conclusion-CD
NONE MORE BLACK-CD / PAINT IT BLACK-live
LOOK BACK AND LAUGH-live / COUGARS-live

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

CRIMINAL DAMAGE-The Power of Fools-LP
TUBERS-The Ultimate Late Night...-LP
THE BAYONETTES-45
THE PUSSY PIRATES/THE TEETH-split EP
TRAGEDY-Nerve Damage-LP
FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES-EP
NO SLOGAN-No Pasaran-EP
ANGRY ANGLES-Apparent Transparent-EP
LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP / PESD-LP
CARBONAS-LP / DARVOCETS-12"

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

CRIMINAL DAMAGE-The Power of Fools-LP
LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
NO SLOGAN-No Pasaran-EP
GRUPO SUB-1/WEBELOS-split EP
TRAGEDY-Nerve Damage-LP
CARBONAS-Cold Waste-LP
WITCH HUNT-LP / DEATHCHARGE-45
V/A-America's Unknown-LP & *Artcore* zine
EJECTORS-Hydrohead-LP / LA PESTE-LP
PELIGRO SOCIAL/SURRENDER/YOUNG OFFENDERS-live

DONNA POOLE

THE ANXIETIES-EP
LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
TRAGEDY-Nerve Damage-LP
V/A-America's Unknown-LP
CRIMINAL DAMAGE-The Power of Fools-LP
CARBONAS-Cold Waste-LP
LA PESTE-Better Off Dead-LP
SLEEPER CELL-Alarm-LP
PESD-Politikarepoizonekurvae-LP
EJECTORS-Hydrohead-LP

BRUCE ROEHRS

DEADFALL-Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay-EP
CRIMINAL DAMAGE-The Power of Fools-LP
LIMP WRIST-Want Us Dead-EP
THE SKUDS-Absurd-EP
TRAGEDY-Nerve Damage-LP
UPSTAB-EP / BRAIN HANDLE-Out of Touch-EP
FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES-EP
THE DUCKY BOYS-The War Back Home-CD
SLEEPER CELL-Alarm-LP
VICTIMS/DEATHTOLL-live

RYAN WELLS

ANGRY ANGLES-Apparent Transparent-EP
LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO-La Regla/A Cloaca-45
BLANK ITS-Happy Accidents-CD
BRAIN HANDLE-Out of Touch-EP
CARBONAS-Cold Waste-LP
CHEVEU-Dog/Make My Day-45
FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES-EP
KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS-Tommy of the River-EP
LEATHER UPPERS-Bright Lights-CD
GRUPO SUB-1/WEBELOS-split EP

ZINE TOP TEN

Agitate #7
East Village Inky #30
Impact #60
Millions Will Die #1
New Orleans...My Love
Plastic Bomb #54
Poor and Forgotten #24
Thrash It Away #2
Two Stolen Snapshots: The Bro-Job Chronicles
Xerography Debt #19

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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar '96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#160/Sept '96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov '96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec '96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar '97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, '77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#170/July '97. Tedio Boys, Mine, The Four Cockroaches, Meanwhile, Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hood Rat, Bristle, The Slits. Scene reports: West Canada, France, Indonesia.

#174/Nov '97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct '98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov '99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump 'N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb '00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, "Best Punk Singles of the '90s," the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March '00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April '00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June '00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May '01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June '01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11," Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar '02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl, Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04. The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, "Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scene report

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech scene report, New Zealand scene report.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves, Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

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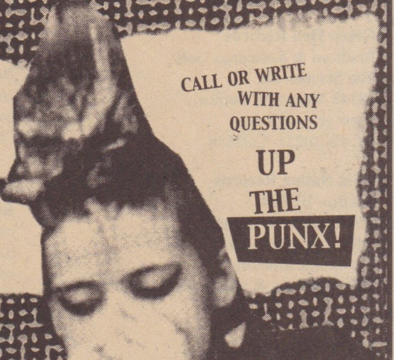

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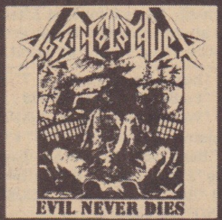

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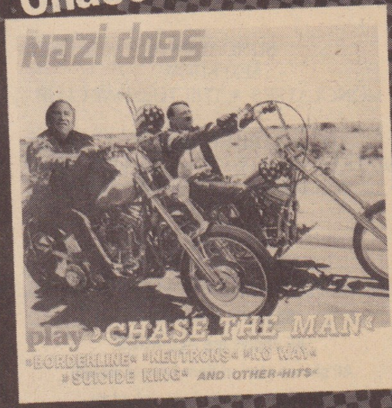

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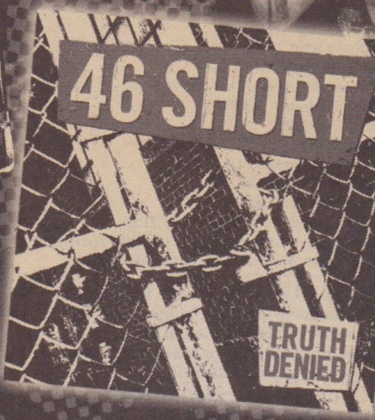

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ALMIGHTY DO ME A FAVOR • SHAKEY BONES

SUNDAY 18 $6
5PM SHOW
IMPERIAL LEATHER (SWEDEN)

FRIDAY 23 $7
BLANKS 77 • HELLBILLYS
ASHTRAY • PELIGRO SOCIAL

FRIDAY 30 $7
KILLING THE DREAM
RUINER (MD) • FINAL FIGHT (L.A.)
COUNTING THE DAYS (MD) • FUTURE PRIMITIVE

JULY

SATURDAY 01 $5
STATIC THOUGHT • RUN LIKE HELL (NY)
NUTS & BOLTS • ANGRY CITIZENS

FRIDAY 07 $5
PHENOMENAUTS • ONION FLAVORED RINGS
GHENGIS KHAN • SWEET NOTHING

SATURDAY 08 $6
VERBAL ABUSE • AMERICA'S DIRTY THIRTYS
SAHN MARU • TIPPERS GORE • DECRY

SUNDAY 09 $6
5PM SHOW
MONOLATERS • THE TUESDAY CLUB

FRIDAY 14 $5
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A SLEEPING IRONY • 100 SUNS

SATURDAY 15 $7
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No racist, misogynist, or homophobic bullshit.
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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

Dear Vince Horner—

I am not an avid reader of *MRR*, but do enjoy picking up a copy here and there. I like the reviews and the info contained in the rag. I can respect the thoughts and views of columnist and reviewers/critics.

Your review of the Offenders in the *MRR* that contained a Bastardass interview, was great, but why the Tejas slandering? I mean "fuck Texas" come on man. I am a native Texan. I live in the Bay Area currently for my own reasons, not to "wise up." I do agree with the "climate of frustration" for the time, but to call Texas the "most wretched of red states" is fuk'n out of line.

I don't know if you've been to Texas and had a bad experience, but if that's the case then blame on the pigs/rednecks etc., and not the state as a whole. Texas is huge. It's a big fuk'n state, and a lot of people work hard at creating thriving scenes down there. It goes on everywhere need I remind you!? Many of my friends in Austin, San Antonio, Dallas, Houston, and countless other cities work hard to bring good bands down there, and bands in turn are greeted and respected by equally good Texas bands. The current crop of Texas bands is pretty fuk'n awesome—World Burns to Death, Pretty Little Flower, Century of War, Kegcharge, Insect Warfare, Hatred Surge, Akkolyte, and Signal Lost, among others. As with the past bands I don't feel the need to mention.

Not to diss the West Coast or the East, but you guys need to wise up and not be so pretentious. There is a lot going on in Texas, as well as other cities in the U$A.

Thanx for your time.

—Robert Avery

MRR—

I am writing to inform you that one of the most legendary punk rockers in Leningrad, frontman and songwriter for BRIGADNIY PODRYAD, Nikolai Vasiliyevich "Kolya" Mikhailov, was found dead in his St. Petersburg apartment on April 28. He is thought to have died of natural causes around April 20th.

Kolya was born on December 8, 1967. He started musical activities when in sixth grade; Mikhailov and his classmates, all based in Kupchino, a suburb in southern part of the city, formed bands called FOOTSTEPS, then ROLLING EGGS, then something else. BRIGADNIY PODRYAD, one of the first punk bands in Leningrad, formed in June 1986 and recorded its first self-titled album the same year in the home studio of Fyodor "Begemot" Lavrov, guitar player in other pioneering punk bands, NARODNOYE OPOLCHENIYE and OTDEL SAMOISKORENENIYA. The band's lineup wasn't very stable and they were only able to play about a dozen gigs by 1990. However, their impact was very noticeable; they were playing hard and loud '77 influenced punk, their songs were harshly criticizing the Soviet life—typically from a working class point of view—and of course, Mikhailov's powerful vocals were a crucial element. He wrote several of the band's best-known songs, and was the most colorful character, if not the outright leader. Some of his exploits include being arrested for calling someone at a pub a "deputy," a fight with three policemen and successful escape, falling through storefront windows when drunk, and arranging for his fines to be sent to the Leningrad Rock Club's president, his namesake Nikolai Dmitriyevich Mikhailov. BRIGADNIY PODRYAD recorded a second album (initially self-titled and later renamed *Vsyo—Pank-rok*") in 1988 at the NCh / VCh squat in Leningrad, and then the third one in 1989, *Chlenskiy Vznos*. In 1990 BRIGADNIY PODRYAD went on a hiatus but Mikhailov kept the name. He recorded a few more albums at home, which were more like anti-social pop with lyrics about alcoholism, street fights, and such. In 1996 the band has reformed; Kolya shared vocals with a younger bloke named Sasha Konviser (he helped out on some earlier albums). However, the years of alcohol abuse have taken their toll, and in November 1997 Mikhailov was forced to quit the band. Apparently he fell down coming home from work and has suffered brain damage. For a few years he was practically homeless and lived in friends' apartments. Several benefit gigs and an album of BRIGADNIY PODRYAD covers by the singer of Russia's most commercially successful pop punk band KOROL I SHUT Mikhail "Gorshok" Gorshenyov helped Mikhailov afford a place to live. However, his friends who would occasionally visit him to bring food etc. remarked that he seemed to have lost interest in life and music. BRIGADNIY PODRYAD was recording a new album in the winter of 2005 and tried to get him to contribute, but Kolya wasn't interested.

Mikhailov is not the first member of BRIGADNIY PORDYAD to die—their original drummer Igor "Said" Saikin passed in 1998. One of his replacements, Alexandr "Blekmor" Troitskiy, died on March 15, 2006, from alcohol poisoning at the age of 33. He played in Russia's oldest punk band—AVTOMATICHESKIYE UDOVLETVORITELI—between 1994 and 1997, and in BRIGADNIY PODRYAD from 2000. On a related note, NARODNOYE OPOLCHENIYE frontman Alexandr "Alex Ogolteliy" Strogachov died from heart failure in a St. Petersburg hospital on September 16, 2005.

For more infomation, please check Semi-official website: http://www.podryad.spb.ru

—Szarapow, with thanks to Andrei Burlaka

MRR—

Help! I'm stuck in the dungeon at SF County Jail and being subjected to one of the cruelest and inhuman punishments ever devised. What I'm being forced to endure rivals the worst crimes ever committed by the marines at Abu Graib Prison in Iraq. I'm talking about something far more heinous than Chinese water torture—American Television Torture.

It goes like this—the pigs have a TV mounted just out of reach in front of my cell blasting the worst commercial-packed network brainrot imaginable and it stays on for sixteen hours a day at full volume. But wait, it gets worse...far worse. Every afternoon I'm injected with near lethal doses of heavy rotation corporate turdburger rock and rap videos that have resonated so deeply into my cranium that I bang my head against the bars whenever I hear Beyonce. It's like some kinda Pavlovian nightmare set to the thump thumping of bling bling.

While some suburban kid that was raised on MTV might be able to cope with this state-sponsored brainwashing, such is not the case with me. I grew up in the SF Mission district across the street from Guererro Beach and Verbal Abuse/Fuck Ups/Fuckettes. My first show was GBH and the Circle Jerks at the Farm for like $2.00 and it seems like MDC and DRI played every other weekend. Yeah, I guess that you could say that I'm spoiled rotten as far as music exposure goes and that's what makes this ordeal feel like a chapter straight out of Dante's

Inferno—I'm in my own personal hell and to top it off the fascist pigs got my board.

So help out a suffering skate punk and send me a cake with a (illegally downloaded hardcore) file in it before they drag me to the fucking rubber room for a lobotomy. As if I could be so lucky.

Miserably yours,
—Outlaw Skatepunk Jesse
Barrio Mission, SFC

P.S. Be on the lookout for my new zine, *FTP (Fuck the Police)* out as soon as I am.

Paul & MRR folks—

I am your cranky old uncle who has been there and done that. I have bought and sold drugs. I have stolen food and fuel. I have never threatened to cut someone if they didn't give me their wallet.

An attitude I have often encountered in the scene, and with occasionally *MRR*, is that everyone in prison is a victim, oppressed by the system, one of us.

Well, yeah, we are all one but my sympathy is directly proportional to the way someone is inside. Are you pulling 15 to 20 years because you trashed five million dollars worth of construction equipment in an ELF Action, or did you shoot someone while robbing their place of work?

Some people find this a petty, even narrow-minded, moral distinction. To me it is crucial.

The important thing is that you published my letter anyway, even if you didn't get the point. Or, more probable, you understand, disagreed, and just found it easier to be snarky with me if you pretend not to get it. Even better.

This is why I love *MRR* (which, by the way, I have been reading since Board was mailing in his column from Japan). You give everybody a voice, no matter how whacked out or just plain wrong they are.

Keep it up!
—Fred

Dearest Punks—

I'd like to add my stinky asshole of an opinion to the business issue of Mr. Mike Taylor had a very good point, there are more important issues to discuss and fight against, this topic is a "wet sandwich" but I'll eat anything.

There are many just as wet but equally important sandwiches in punk rock; the seeming (to me at least) rise of Christianity and other faith-based punks, as well as the "apolitical" /right wing faction that has been a part of punk from the beginning (Johnny Ramone is a Republican?!?!). A local band member who seems quite active in the scene, or at least on the local-centric message board, posted a message saying fuck politics and political punks and "Bomb Iran... I am not joking"—unfortunately neither am I. A friend of mine posted a topic on the same message board in search of people to play music with, and he mentioned not being into jamming with Jesus-freaks. He was berated by these punks for being mean to Christians. Perhaps these concerns could make for new theme-type issues of MRR. The cohesiveness of the columns and the main article made for a good read.

Down to business, Punk can and to a large extent does exist outside of the music industry, but is that all we want? Just to be separate? Or do we want to be different too? Do we want to be punk? The way to be dangerous and vital is to threaten the practices of the music industry, not just their profits. The problem is record labels and bands that act just like major labels and bands. I'll use a label and their bands as an example. Fat Wreck Chords is an independent label (as independent as you can be with funding from royalties gained from records released on Epitaph) that acts exactly like a major. There could be a good aspect to Fat. Kids exposed to Fat releases in the mall *might* choose to dig deeper and find the true underground music scene. I only mention this because that is what happened to me. Before I got Propaghandi's first record I thought punk died in the '80s. That debt owed to Fat does not stop me from attacking them now for their sleazy deals. Not to mention Mike's shitty fucking lyrics about golfing and Mondays spent at bars...prick.

Fat Wreck Chords does not seem to release any bands' first record anymore. They have moved into the position of a major label within the independent scene. For example, Against Me! and the Epoxies were on small independent local(-ish) labels, No Idea and Dirtnap respectively. They exploded in popularity and were snatched up by Fat. Against Me! has now apparently signed to Sire (what the fuck?). Fat Mike knew their second albums would sell because of their previously-established popularity, and that is why he put those records out, not because he is friends with the bands. That is business, not punk.

The bands that take advantage of their hard-earned popularity in the underground to sign to bigger, more supportive labels are just as bad as those bigger labels acting like majors. I remember reading that Tom from Against Me! wanted to sign with Fat for more tour support, a better van, guarantees, hot towels backstage, or whatever; yet once the deal was inked Against Me! started touring with Anti-Flag and playing venues for a few thousand instead of a few dozen people. This is not to mention the actual fucking music. These bands' records on Fat are simply not as good as their first records on their former smaller labels. Is that the price you pay to get more support on tour? An inferior record full of filler and no fucking heart? If Against Me!'s records on Fat suck so much, can you imagine how much the turd they will shit out for Sire will stain the toilet?

This doesn't affect the average punk very much. It makes some of us feel dirty. It makes me wonder what my first pressing of *Reinventing Axl Rose* will fetch on eBay, now that I see the ideas presented in it were a lie and a fucking joke. However, if we tolerate these practices, we are no different than the kids in Hot Topic buying whatever fucking shit is cool to them right now. And if we aren't different from the kids that don't know better, than we fucking lose and should all stop being such snobs. We should write these people off and sever our ties with them as concerns their music and our scene. Don't buy the records, don't run the ads. We all have different ideas and ethics and we should apply those to everything we do and buy as much as we can. I don't wear Chucks 'cause I wont support Nike. If you're okay with supporting Nike than go ahead and wear Chucks. I'm not vegan but I understand why someone would be and I have to live with that conflicting ethic and personal choice. That's how punk works—people applying their ethics and taking the time and trouble to live differently than as dictated by the society we inhabit. We can't be entirely separate from this society and we can't be entirely separate from the music industry with people like those mentioned above in our midst. However, we can and should be entirely different.

Love
—Tristan

P.S. feel free to edit/take out of context any of the above drivel.

MRR—

Wanted to throw out a question related to the topic in the last issue; appreciate any help. I generally have no interest in buying music from any group/label/whatever that is affiliated with any major label, or any smaller label that acts like a major, through distribution or any other aspect of putting out music but, at the same time, I don't know a whole lot of specifics about different labels. Can anyone suggest any good methods or resources for researching labels and uncovering different business practices, such as using major-owned distributors? This question comes from my search for some old Poison Idea last year (perhaps you can see where this is going) and my subsequent purchase from a crappy looking website for a label I hadn't heard of before, Taang. Felt kind of deceived after learning more about them. Also, I was wondering about *MRR*'s distribution. I may be wrong here, but it is my understanding that *MRR* will not review any records that come from labels affiliated with majors in any way, including being distributed by major label-owned distros, while

at the same time being distributed by Borders Books themselves. Is this not maybe one instance where *MRR* doesn't live up to its own ethical standards? Are there any reasons for this beyond the oft-heard justification used by many bands and labels that it's the only way to reach many people? It would be nice to hear a bit about this from some of the folks at *MRR* while these couple issues are exploring the topic.

Thanks for the responses to the interviews from the guys from 625 and G7 Welcoming Committee.

—Justin

Hey Justin—

It's true that it's become harder and harder to tell what labels have major label affiliations. The truth is, corporate infiltration into the punk scene has more and more taken the form of back door distribution deals and label subsidizing than it has the easier to stop method of swooping in and taking bigger bands off of indie rosters (which still happens of course). There is no full-proof way to know about any one label, but usually scouring the internet for distribution affiliations turns up the information you'd be looking for. It is a bummer when labels that cater to hardcore/punk audiences (a la Taang) turn out to be less-than-totally independent, but the only way to know for sure is to do your research.

As for the second part of your question, I'll tell you exactly how Maximumrocknroll is distributed. The majority of distro is completely in-house, and through the usual punk sources. The magazines get delivered here and we send them out to subscribers, a ton of little stores around the country, larger DIY punk distros (i.e. Ebullition and No Idea), all of our foreign distributors (check out page five for a full list), etc. It's a monthly ritual initiated by Clara and carried through Martin of boxing up thousands of issues, and shipping 'em out, not to mention driving around all the Bay Area issues and hand-delivering them to stores. It's a lot of work, and a lot of black ink all over our hands, but pretty fun and exciting too when we get a new issue and get to send it out to eager readers.

The second part of our distribution is carried through by Indy Press Newsstand Services, which is the distribution wing of a non-profit organization called the Indy Press Association. Indy Press is a San Francisco-based non-profit started to work for the survival of independent media—other magazines they distribute include Punk Planet and Bitch—and they are pretty much the only independent option for non-corporate magazines. Indy Press isn't "punk" but they are definitely not a "major label owned distro." Indy Press is how we get into Borders Books, though we don't have a deal directly with Borders. While we do sell in Borders as well as in Tower Records, the majority of our newsstand copies through the Indy Press go to independent book stores, infoshops, and record stores, not only because these are the stores we'd rather support but because these are the stores that go through great pains to support us. I see our presence at Borders as the equivalent of being able to walk into Tower Records to buy the Minor Threat discography CD on Dischord—we have attempted at every turn to control every aspect of MRR's production and distribution, and we won't ever make a deal with a major label for distro, but if a store is willing to deal with a DIY distributor to carry MRR, we are happy to oblige so that people can get their hands on our magazine. The idea is that we don't take any money from big business in the actual production of the zine.

Until about five years ago, all of the distribution I describe above (with the exception of the individual subscriptions we sent out) was handled by Mordam Records. The saga of Mordam and MRR is well-documented elsewhere, but suffice it to say that Maximum left Mordam because we were dissatisfied with the increasingly profit-driven view they took towards their work, as well as their increasing willingness to work in the grey areas of corporate complicity. I think that history has proven us to have been on the right end of that decision. While leaving Mordam was financially disastrous for the magazine, we would make that decision again in a heartbeat if we felt that any of our distributors no matter how large or small were moving away from a non-corporate ethic.

—Golnar

MRR—

I would really like to applaud the *MRR* editors, columnists, and staff on the amazing job that was done with issue #276—"Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" My only regret is that the issue didn't come out sooner so I could have been warned about how nasty and corrupt "indie" labels can be. Ever since I discovered punk rock music in the seventh grade, I've always associated a certain DIY morality with the scene. The ideas of "don't sell out" and "do it yourself" and "support independent business" because ingrained in my consciousness. I also assumed that those bands and labels that were punk rock or indie held the same ideal. That's what being independent is, right? After going to college and getting fully engrossed in independent/non-profit community radio, my passion for music was even more heightened. It was from the point that I decided I wanted to make music, or, more important punk/independent music my life. I wanted to start my own label, put out music by bands I loved (regardless of commercial appeal), and do it essentially by myself. But, I was green in a lot of areas about having my own label, so I decided to intern for an "indie/punk" label that had in the past definitely followed DIY ideals.

Everything started out great. While I was just stuffing envelopes and managing the online catalog I was also learning a lot about how to run an independent business. My internship eventually led to a job, and my dream had come true—I was earning a living putting out the music that I loved. But after a short while things started to change. Some bigger companies and labels started paying attention to the label. Slime balls in shiny cars and stories about working with trashy mainstream artists started coming by the office. I found this deplorable, but not wanting to lose what I had worked for to this point I kept my thoughts to myself. It started quickly going downhill, and with more outside "dirty" money was coming in, the music we were putting out—with a few exceptions was "soulless shit rock" that I found un-listenable, both musically and ethically. When I finally began to voice my disapproval, I was shot down repeatedly and told that, "This is how the music business is, and if I didn't like it then I should think about another line of work." I was crushed. Could this really be how "indie" labels work, all of them? Were they all hoping to sign the next big thing, so that some big fat major label could come and buy the band, giving the label more money to do it all over again? Having interacted with a lot of other so-called "indie" labels I have seen many of them doing the exact same thing, which further damaged my hope for ethics and standards in the independent music business.

But after reading all the amazing columns and label interviews in #276, I felt a sense of rebirth. It's great to see that there are still awesome labels out there doing it DIY, not giving a fuck about trends, just putting out the music they want. What a thrill to know that while major labels and corporations are hurting punk rock there are still plenty of ethical people ready to put up a fight.

Thanks,

—Tyler

Los Angeles, CA

Tyler—

I'm glad you enjoyed the business issues of MRR. What you write is a sadly quintessential story that outlines the slippery slope of corporate involvement that a punk label can find themselves sucked into. Unfortunately, we can't create a non-capitalist utopia in which punk bands, labels, and fanzines can thrive without having to worry about money, which is why we have to be constantly vigilant about the choices that we make about our music and our art, lest we come to find it totally corrupted. These aren't black and white decisions—that is for sure—but they are decisions that demand the utmost in care and ethical consideration.

—Golnar

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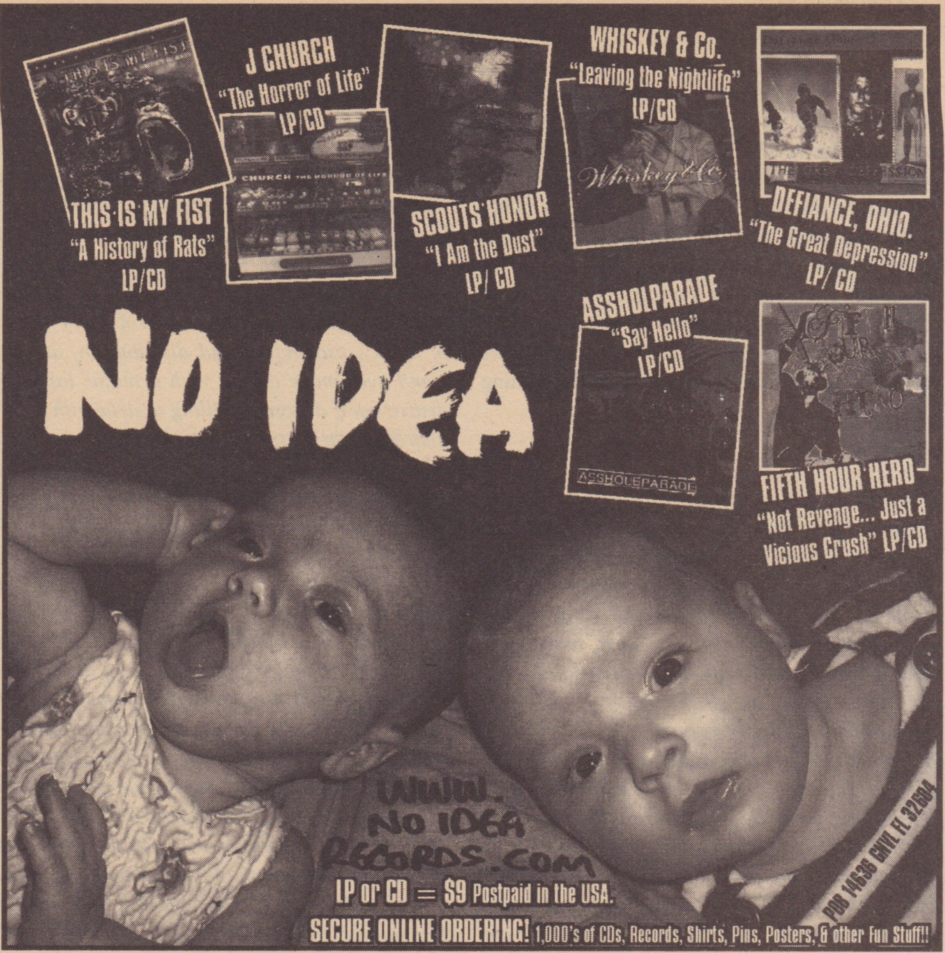


COLUMNS

EVIDENCE: FOUR RED-POLISHED FINGERNAILS BROKEN OFF DURING THE STRUGGLE

The 2006 Lacrosse Rape at Duke University

A young Black woman was gang raped by white members of Duke's prestigious lacrosse team on March 13, 2006.

In my attempts to analyze the language used by the media regarding the scandal that has ensued, I have to find my own place in this conversation. First, I am a writer who has no intention of posing as an unbiased journalist. This column will not seek to determine the guilt of the defendants beyond a reasonable doubt. I am not a juror; I am a radical feminist and a California-certified Rape Crisis Counselor. Still, after reading more than twenty articles on the subject from reputed news sources, including *The New York Times, Salon,* and even *The Harvard Crimson,* I believe that the rape occurred. This column will proceed under that assumption. I will analyze the discourse on this event, and how it is informed by cultural assumptions based on race, sexuality, class, and a notion of athletic prestige as cultural commerce.

My perspective is influenced by other factors. I am a white woman living in the United States. I am twenty-nine years old, unmarried, childless, bisexual, sexually active. For seven years, I have lived in a poor neighborhood inhabited by the typical mix that comes from partial gentrification: working-class immigrant families and artists of a variety of races, primarily white.

This is particularly relevant, not just to determine my prejudices and privileges, but in looking at my personal habits. I am simultaneously reckless and paranoid. I get drunk and walk through the city in miniskirts by myself, but never down unfamiliar or dark roads. I have an intricate system of determining what is safe and isn't, where I can and cannot go. I walk my friends home and check on them before I leave parties. I have taken self-defense classes. I used to hitchhike alone at fifteen and now I live with the history of the risks of my past, the scars they have left on my face, mouth, nerves.

If I were to be raped on one of these walks home, certain factors would affect how seriously the police and the District Attorney would take my case. I live with this awareness, all of the time: when I choose a skirt instead of jeans, whiskey instead of water. I also live with the awareness that the fact that I am white will forever determine how I am to be viewed by the police, despite my dyed hair and tattoos. It is a privilege that cannot be erased, ignored, or taken away from me, as uncomfortable as it makes me, as meaningless as I believe it is.

Let's begin with the facts of the case as they have been reported in the mainstream media. In an article entitled "Dancer Gives Detail of Ordeal" published in *The News & Observer,* 25 March 2006, Samiha Khanna and Anne Blythe describe the preliminary situation of the evening in question as follows: the survivor and another young Black woman were hired to strip for "five men at a bachelor party." They arrived at the off-campus private home—similar to a fraternity house—that housed the entire Duke lacrosse team. Instead of a five-person bachelor party, the two dancers were faced with over forty white men. Of the Duke lacrosse team's 46 members, only one is Black and the rest are white.

Some members of the team began to yell racial slurs as the women were dancing for them, and, "'We started to cry,' [the survivor] said. 'We were so scared.'" This was her *first private party,* and she didn't know the other dancer she was performing with.

This took place in North Carolina, the "Good South" the "Safe Carolina." This took place in Durham, a college town divided between Black and white, with nearly equivalent populations of each race.

According to an article by Susannah Meadows and Evan Thomas, "A Troubled Spring at Duke" in *Newsweek* 10 April 2006, the dancers were right to be nervous by the sight of so many white men. Once they began to perform their routine, one of the players called out, "Did you bring any sex toys?" The women told them no, and the tension mounted when one of the white men yelled, "That's okay, we'll just use a broom."

The women tried to leave. But one woman was coaxed back into the house—her shoes were in there. She was then raped, beaten, and strangled by three men in the bathroom of the frat house for an hour, while the men continued to hurl racial slurs her way.

"It wasn't the greatest job," she said.

"Everybody," said Tucker Carlson on *MSNBC's The Situation with Tucker Carlson* 11 April 2006 "knows the truth, which is, the testimony of an ordinary person is different from the testimony of someone who hires herself out to dance naked in front of and, yes, sometimes sleep with people, strangers, right? They're different. It's okay to have a bias against strippers in this case, isn't it?"

He continued his point later on in his interview with Wendy Murphy, an adjunct professor at the New England School of Law—yes, a woman professor who disagrees with him regarding the matter and who seemed taken aback by his rant—"[the fact that she was a stripper] doesn't mean she wasn't raped…[but her] testimony about matters of sex is to be taken by ordinary commonsense people a little differently than the testimony of someone who isn't a crypto-hooker."

What power does this language have over our understanding of rape? Who deserves to be raped? When is it not that big of a deal? When the girl is drunk and white and in the wrong neighborhood alone? There is always a reason to blame the victim. What is the difference between

a mother and a stripper? Between an athlete and a student? Between a student and a stripper? Between rich and poor? White and Black? Who gets to be safe, and who doesn't?

Erin Texeira offers another perspective from the rest of the mainstream media in her article "Duke Rape Scandal Reopens Old Wounds" for the *Associated Press* 13 April 2006. She considers the legacy of hyper-sexualization of Black women in the United States. She quotes the hip-hop feminist Joan Morgan's analysis that the perception that Black women are being sexually available to white men has, "been here since slavery." Texeira quotes a 22-year old Black female graduate student: "If she's a stripper, she becomes part of a seedy underworld," Williams said. "What would the story look like if the headline had said, 'Lacrosse team allegedly gang-raped and strangled mother of two?'"

Did I forget to mention that she was a mother? So did several of the news articles. And, according to another piece in the *Associated Press* by Allen G. Breed, "Alleged Rape in N.C. Plays to Stereotypes" 01 April 2006, that's not all they forgot to mention. The survivor, like her assailants, was a student, but not at the prestigious Duke University, where tuition is $44,000—*higher than the mean income in town*—but at North Carolina Central, a primarily Black institution with tuition of $10,000.

In the same article, a neighbor, Jason Bissey, mentions hearing a member of the lacrosse team shouting at the survivor, "Hey bitch! Thank your grandpa for my nice cotton shirt."

We are at war. I realize this every day, realized it when I walked down the street as a young girl, acutely aware of the stares of men that looked to me like predatory animals. I recognized the hatred that underlined these stares. I am at war and I am losing. That doesn't mean I am not here to fight it this war, only that I feel it in my skin. But I am not here to just fight a war against sexual violence. I am also here to fight other wars. The war against racial inequality in this country is inextricably linked to feminism. What does it mean for a Black man to be accused of raping a white woman? Why does my mind process this differently, with suspicion? The history of the lynch mob hangs heavy in my mind.

Seven years ago, I wanted to make movies. I made a queer punk girl's take on an old John Waters movie, subverting the male gaze, creating a female one. My actresses wore pink wigs, drank that Maddog 20/20 that cost two fifty and came in exotic flavors like "kiwi" (bright green) and "strawberry banana" (hot pink). The film was about those moments before the attack, the moments that aren't of acute violence but of subtle humiliation.

I taped the closing titles, where you list the name of the entire cast and crew, last. My housemate had a video camera and a computer set up as a stop-motion animation station. I decided to do some cute, animated titles, in stop-motion—the one kind of animation that makes sense if you can't draw, because you can just push objects around between shots, and presto! On tape they move.

I went to a nearby antique store and bought several pulp novels with misogynist titles: *Slay the Loose Ladies; Murder, My Love; The Impatient Virgin; Man Trap; Women of Evil; Little Sister; Unnatural Wife; Rape;* and, my favorite, *Is My Flesh of Brass?* I thought that using the novels as a backdrop for my titles was a good way of illustrating the subtext of my film: *the world is against us! We are even against each other!* This sort of pulp is written to entertain men while simultaneously allowing them to feel morally superior to their female subjects.

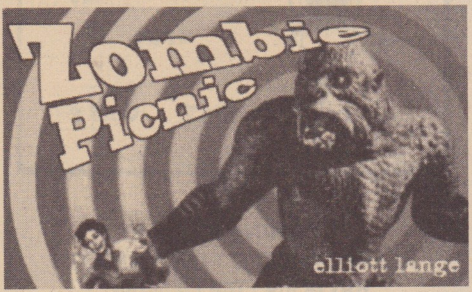
Afterwards, at a toy store, I bought pink plastic baby girls the size of my pinkie nail and little blue ballerinas and covered them with nail polish blood. I was floored.

When I began to take out the 1960s typewriter to write the names of my actresses, I took a closer look at the covers. I realized that the cover of *Rape* portrayed a white woman with blonde hair in the foreground, and a horrible caricature of a black man in the background. How could I not have noticed?

I am trying to imagine a world where a pulp novel named *Rape* would depict a team of white athletes attacking a young mother. To imagine a world where a Black working-class mother of two will win her rape trial against three white men of privilege. I don't live in such a place.

In Alice Bumgarner's article "Duke Exposed" published on *Salon* 4 April 2006, a Duke professor, Houston A. Baker, describes a recent Academic Counsel meeting where members of the faculty challenged the administration to hold the accused accountable. "One of the faculty asked President Brodhead directly, 'Will you say, I condemn Duke's culture of alcohol, violence and sexual assault, and make that a top-down statement?' He answered essentially, I will not do that. I thought, wow." The subtext of President Brodhead's statement is that these young men are untouchable, for all the reasons previously mentioned, but also because they are characterized by a superhuman prestige that comes from being a cherished college athlete.

What is purity, and who gets to keep it—those born rich enough to be "moral" and not have to strip? What is rape, and what causes it? What in American culture perpetuates it as acceptable behavior? What role has race played historically in this country? If the rapists had been three Black men from North Carolina Central, and the survivor had been a young white woman from Duke, what sorts of articles would we be reading?



Well, for those of you in fellow nerdland, you know the stress of finals time and the euphoric release of being done. The former has been keeping my guts well-tied, my face good and zitty, and my editors ever so patiently awaiting my tardy column. The later is now making me so lazy with all my newfound free time, I'm finding it hard to concentrate enough to get a single "fucking brutal" down on paper.

In keeping with my current lethargy, I'll start things off with some similarly slow-moving fare, first from a new cross-coast duo, BLACK COBRA and their rekkid *Bestial* on At a Loss Records (www.atalossrecordings.com). After reviewing a short three-song CD from these guys a year or two back, I was looking forward to hearing more, as the six minute total of the self-titled release wasn't quite enough to form a solid judgment of the band. *Bestial* more than adequately confirms that these guys are seriously adept at making seriously punishing sounds. Comprised of the drummer from 16 and the guitarist of CAVITY, you know these dudes are well versed in the art of slow and heavy, sounding not unlike their previously bands or the likes of FLOOR and KARP, but with some odd, spastically speedy guitar runs and a huge, blown-out guitar sound. Really, this is ridiculously heavy. Great stuff.

And speaking of gut-rumbling, inner-ear equilibrium-shaking low frequencies,

THE ABOMINABLE IRON SLOTH lays out the tar thick and smelly as well on their new self-titled release (Goodfellow Records, www.goodfellowrecords.com). I almost don't want to tell you what moderately big mid-/late- '90s metalcore band this has members from so you can figure it out and say, "oh yeah...." on your own, but, well, fuck it—it's WILL HAVEN. Knowing that, this is a logical extension of the detuned stop/start mid-pace style they were working back then, except they've dropped the quasi-emo metalcore trappings and are steering in more of a stoner/sludge type direction, which though admittedly trendy these days, suits them just fine. There're some ploddingly dull and forgettable tracks on the album's back nine, but the first half is pretty devastating, in particular, opener "Hats Made of Veal and That New Car Smell," which has the best damn set of riffs I've heard in months. I can't stop playing this track. The vocals also deserve mention—I don't know how this guy keeps up such a vicious throat-shredding scream throughout the whole record.

Unfortunately Goodfellow also felt the need to have Sweden's THE SMACKDOWN tag along in their promo packet, with their musical abortion of a record, *Someone Has to Kill the Headwriter*. If Mark McCoy's suffocating newt delivery isn't bratty enough for you, if THE LOCUST's riffs are too catchy and memorable, and if you can't get enough treble to save your life, you'll adore THE SMACKDOWN. The rest of us will be eyeing this in the cut-out bin in stacks of tens.

Next up is a brief split CD featuring just three and two songs respectively from FIGHT AMPUTATION and EXOSUS (Kordova Milk Bar Records, www.kmbrecs.tk). I was pretty stoked to see this initially as these two East Coast bands (Rhode Island and DC, respectively) had been among the few standout metalcore releases I've reviewed in the last year or two. Neither band was exactly breaking new ground, but both managed to distinguish themselves with interesting arrangements, good riffs, and enough energy to carry it through. Maybe it's just cuz the boon of lowered expectations is now gone, but the impact from each isn't quite hitting me in the nards like before. A couple of "hmm, heard that before" notions creep into the brain, and I'm still not picking up on any killer weird-time breakdowns like before. Still decent stuff from both, but I'd recommend starting with their 7"s.

Sticking around the metropolitan DC area though I somehow doubt they shared many bills, there's a whole heap of MAGRUDERGRIND released recently from this Maryland-based three-piece. First up, in case you've been missing what these thrashers have been cooking up in the last few years, Torture Garden Picture Company Records helps you make up for lost time with the exhaustive, precisely titled *Sixty-Two Trax of Thrash*, compiling a good half dozen 7"s plus their demo and other shit. If a full hour's worth of the dude's maniacal screeching over the blistering hardcore/grind attack isn't enough, you can also pick up the newly released MAGRUDERGRIND/SHITSTORM split CD (not included on the *Sixty-Two Trax* CD) on Robotic Empire (www.roboticempire.com). I'd kinda forgotten about the once promising Robotic Empire label, as it's been a good couple years since they released anything I liked, so it's nice to see them getting back to some non-emo heavy stuff, like the over-the-top grind contained here. Kicking off with a *Dolemite* sample, these nine tracks are some of MAGRUDER's best—the riffs, energy and high-jumping lead singer acrobatics are flying nonstop. Miami's SHITSTORM more than hold their own as well, with fourteen songs clocking in under ten minutes. This guy's vocals are howling, sounding not unlike the guy from 324, who aren't a bad point of reference for the whole SHITSTORM sound.

Also in the strictly no-frills grind category, we've got the new one from one of the more recent Relapse signees, CRETIN. Based here in Northern California, CRETIN seems to be completely unaware that music was ever played anywhere other than Flint, Michigan. Throughout the 16 tracks on *Freakery*, there is not a single second that is not identical to REPULSION, which is exactly the point I'm sure. I know this sounds like a pretty bitchin' idea, but even so, things get more than a little monotonous by even halfway through album's end. Anyone reading this column is gonna be stoked by the strict adherence to the classic '80s style, but it's hard not to get distracted and bored by the exact same thing on every song with almost no variation in guitar, drums or vocals. Throw in high-concept intellectual lyrics to songs like "Uni-Tit" and "Daddy's Little Girl" and you've got a real head-scratcher as to why Relapse felt the need to sign them.

While on the subject of '80s nostalgia, as modern bands mimic the old days, there's also plenty of reissues to fill you in on what you may have missed. Relapse did the CD a couple years ago, but now Italy's SOA Records (www.soarecords.it) has just reissued the vinyl version (a picture disc) of CRYPTIC SLAUGHTER's classic '86 album, *Convicted*. A big influence on half the bands going in the hardcore scene of today and yet ostracized in its time by the punk and metal communities alike, CRYPTIC SLAUGHTER's bridging of the hardcore and thrash metal sounds of their day lead the way for "crossover" along with DRI, COC and other abbreviated bands. It's pretty amazing both how far the genre has come from these primitive origins, and also how much this sounds exactly like what's going on today. At the risk of ascending the throne of poser-dom, I'll admit I never was too into or listened much to these guys before, but listening to this now it definitely fills in the gaps for today's hardcore history lesson.

On a *completely* different note, a bizarre little buzzard of a CD showed up in the MRR free bin courtesy of ASSACRE and I can understand why this might not be everyone's cup of tea, especially for the stringent punk adherent. But for weirdo metal fans, *Fantastic Illusions Worth Dying For* is a rewarding listening experience. Continuing on in the fine tradition of one-man drum-machine bizarro-grind-metal projects covered in this column (see FANTASTIKOL HOLE, CORPSE DESECRATE, WADGE, etc...) ASSACRE is the most metal-based of the bunch, and pretty damn virtuosic at that. The guy throws in a million riffs per minute, and they're all pretty damn good; the lengthier seven-minute songs feel like workouts or guitar institute of technology instructional tapes. Even the drum programming is solid. Some of it's tinged with that annoying tongue-in-cheek indie irony shit, but for the most part he keeps it in check with anthemic riffs and plenty of weird noise/sample interludes including a couple funny anti-homophobe references—senor ASSACRE is gay, and lets the world know it through song titles like "Gayer than God." Wow, that's pretty gay. Check it out: www.assacre.com.

Also not of traditional grind/metal fare is the new self-titled 10" from the dubiously named HONEY RIDE ME A GOAT (Kitchen Dweller Records, www.kitchendweller.com). This UK trio dabbles in the sort of brain-bending abacus-slinging math rock that is far as I understand pretty universally loathed round this here mag. Not me though. Sure most of it blows chunks, but a couple bands leave me with

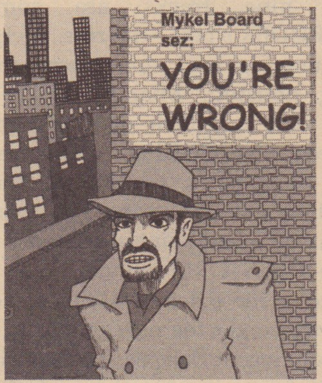
a not-so-bad taste in my mouth, sorta like upchucking bananas instead of pizza. And GOAT is one such a band. That doesn't stop their name from sucking though. Anyway, anyone into stuff like DON CABALLERO, OXES, DYSRHYTHMIA, or RUINS should find something to like on this short little 10". Nothing too pretentious; quick tempos, quick songs, and some cool catchy riffs and tempo shifts make this is a good one to play over and over...if you're into that sorta thing.

Back to the standard issue, this is the second month in a row I've received a killer demo tape from a grind/power violence band from Santa Cruz, California. Last month it was THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE, this time it's IN DISGUST, who are full-on steamrolling grind. Vicious vocals and blazing tempos, this is like PHOBIA all over again. I really can't believe how killer this sounds for a first demo. You'd think these guys had been rocking it for years or were on a split with ASSUCK or something. This is another one of those "better than half the shit pressed to vinyl these days" so definitely get in touch with these malcontents and give 'em some props. Get the thirteen or fourteen (graffiti font is hard to read) song demo for two bucks postage-paid at: Unholy Thrash, PO Box 675, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

Still kicking it after 15 years and countless releases, New York's veterans of uncompromising brutal death/grind, MORTICIAN return with a killer-looking picture disc *Re-Animated Dead Flesh* on Haunted Hotel Records (www.hauntedhotelrecords.com). Even though these guys continue to release about an album a year, I feel like they've been off the general death/grind radar of late—at least for me anyway. I used to listen to these guys more than I'd care to admit, but this is the first I've heard from them in ages. While '96's *Hacked Up for Barbeque* will probably forever be my favorite MORTICIAN record, *Dead Flesh* is a welcome reintroduction to their immediately identifiable sound. Will Rahmer still has the lowest vocals in the business, the drum machine still pounds at a relentless pace and the guitar sound is as detuned as ever. I was disappointed with myself that I couldn't identify a single movie sample this time around (well, except for the *Candyman* sample at the end, but that one's a giveaway); but otherwise, classic MORTICIAN.

Last but certainly not least, I finally got my hands on the new NOISEAR CD—*Red Tape Agenda*—from Roby of Blastasfuk Records (www.geocities.com/blastasfuk) and holy Christ on a crutch, this thing is everything I was waiting for. I've upped these guys a lot in this column and anyone wondering why need only listen to a single track. These guys pack more speed, intensity, and full-on *brutality* in one 58-second song than most bands muster in their lifetime. As stated previously, the drumming is fucking fantastic, but the rest of the band's killer too. My only beef is that the guitars are a little low in the mix so you can't always hear all the thrashing, maiming, bleeding, bruising, and shredding they're doing too. A minor complaint though, and this remains one of the best grind releases in months. This is being sold as a mini-CD, but with 16 songs in 18 minutes, it's as much of a full-length as any good grind record needs to be.

That's all for this month, get in touch/send stuff for review to: Elliott Lange, 1320 Fulton St, SF CA 94117, United Steaks. cromlaughs@hotmail.com



As individuals, we Jews are like everybody else. We may be less prone to drunkenness, we may be more prominent in certain professions, and we may have produced more Nobel Prize winners than any other people; but we don't boast about these things.
—Rabbi John D. Ruyner, Liberal Jewish Synagogue, London

I probe my thumb deeply into my right nostril. Forward, toward the tip. The side of the nail scrapes a crusty mass. No room. I switch fingers. The pinky. This is what it's made for. I wiggle it inside until I manage to catch the top of that crusty mass. I pull. A sharp pain. I wince, withdraw, and try again. Tug. Tug. Uh, aaaah, got it. Loosened and free. Needing only to be withdrawn. Damn, I lost it again. Somewhere high. I don't want it to escape into a sinus or be drawn into a lung. I hold the top of my nose on either side and blow. Hard. Fast. There it comes. Reaching back in with the thumb, I snag it. Drag it down until I can pinch the thing between my thumb and index finger and take it out completely.

I hold it up to the light to examine it. Green, with flecks of blood red. It's about the size of a small pea. I put my pinkie back into my nose and withdraw it. The fingertip is crimson with fresh blood.

Shift: I've just returned from a ten-day tour of the Northwest. Book readings, heavy drinking. I wrote about it last month, except for the part about the strip club in Portland where this girl had the most amazing breast control I've ever seen... Dancing to the music, she pretends she's tied strings to her nipples.

Using her fingers to pull up and down on the fake strings, her breasts jerk up and down exactly as if tied to real strings. She bounces her breasts, hands-free, one at a time—up, down, like you might raise your fingers to type on the keyboard. Jump. Jump. Jump. Jump.

In the back of the club lies a secret passageway that leads to the burrito place around the corner. After the puppet-breast set, my hosts and I go through the passageway and order burritos. Then, we return to the strip club. Faster than a beanfart, the burritos are delivered to our seats—right in front of the stage.

My hosts tell me that, in addition to the highest bar count per capita, Portland has the most per capita strip clubs. It's weird that people know these things, but I guess it's part of their identity as Portlanders. I could live there.

Shift again. The deadline approaches for another column. My trip stories have run out. (Except for a fire hydrant running smack into the back of my rental car, but what's to tell?) I look for inspiration for number 278.

I find it in number 10, where I first started writing for this zine. I find it in all those early columns. I find it in the changes since that time—in what I did, but never said.

I look back and see that 20 years ago, other columnists didn't write about their own lives and adventures. They wrote about lofty ideas and punk purity. I wrote about anal folds. Now, others do. Other columnists didn't write in the present tense. They wrote about things as if they were historians. Like they were telling about something that happened *long ago and far away*. They couldn't grab the immediacy, the what-happens-next of the present. They were detached and impersonal. I wrote in the present. Now others do.

Other columnists didn't write about sex,

except in passing, as jokes, or to talk about how awful and exploitative it is. I wrote about sex. Others do now. Other columnists didn't mention their own faults, their pimples, their falling-out hair, their dribbles-not-spurts. I wrote about that. A few others do now. No one else had Endnotes in 1982. Check it out now.

Am I saying I'm responsible for all this? Am I saying if it weren't for me, columns would be nothing more than thoughts on how bad GW Bush is and how good Crass was? *Yes!* That's exactly what I'm saying, but I don't want to boast.

Shift back to my booger. Like that booger pulled from my nose, I love removing things from my body. I scrape off those calloused brown skin marks that old Jews get. I pop the whitehead on my cheek, letting the white pus ooze down my fingernail. I rub the loose flesh from between my toes. I dig in my anal folds for the recalcitrant dingleberry that I just know is there.

A young white trash couple visit New York. They wheel their gender-ambiguous toddler in one of those new three-wheeled strollers. The kid softly gums the ear of little teddy bear. The parents stop to read the menu in the window of the Noho Star. The toddler takes the bear from its mouth and throws it on the ground.

I reach down and pick it up.

"Your baby dropped this," I say to Mom, as I hand the toy to the kid.

"Thanks," says Mom.

The kid shakes the bear a couple of times and throws it on the ground again.

Mom takes it this time and hugs it to her chest. The child screams.

"I won't give it to you if you're going to throw it away," she says.

The kid doesn't get it. He (or she?) screams louder, reaching up, straining against the stroller seatbelt, in a vain effort to reach the bear.

"Don't give it to him," says Dad. "He'll just throw it on the ground again. It's probably filthy already. Remember, this is New York."

Mom wants to give in. She does, handing the bear back to the child. The child stops crying... and immediately throws the bear on the ground again.

This time Dad grabs it.

"That does it," he says. "Let's get out of here. This place is too expensive anyway."

"Don't you know it's healthy for kids to do that?" I don't yell after them as they waddle off into the distance. "Don't you know that's how kids learn the limits of *self*? That child is only discovering *me* and *not me*. It's what kids do. It's what *everyone* should do."

Centuries before me, Rene Descartes did his own bear throwing/booger pulling. He too tried to scrape everything away until he came to a center that was really him. He called it *thinking*. But GW Bush, a six-pack of Sparks, and most of the readers of this zine have shown me that it's easy to exist and *not* think. So the core must be something else.

I mean, what about you? Are you a punk? A lefty? An anarchist? How long will you stay one? What's your core?

People usually start as lefty idealists. As they age, they grow increasingly conservative. Punk bands start their musical lives as idealistic social activists and end their careers wiggling on stage in Las Vegas. Charges of *hypocrite* and *sell-out* follow every move. The band either spends time and energy lamely trying to defend itself, or it simply cuts itself off from its old world and embraces the change.

In Anti-Flag's *Underground* album they say, *"Just take a look around the world and you're going to find that nearly all mass media are owned and controlled by a handful of conservative capitalists. We must devise and implement alternative methods of distributing our ideas—People worldwide working together to make a stand, to tell the truth!"*

Anti-Flag jumps to RCA-Sony, the notorious major label that infects computers with spyware—just by playing their CDs. You'd expect a chorus of "sell-outs" and rants against hypocrisy. Yet, when I google *Anti-Flag* and *RCA* and *Sell-out*, most of the 318 sites that come up *defend* the band. They say their heroes are *not* sell-outs. They explain how they are getting the word out—avoiding preaching to the choir. Gaining new converts to a righteous cause.

I dunno. It's my guess that Anti-Flag are throwing down their teddy bears. They've decided that smallness is not them. They've decided the singing to the sung-to is not them. They've decided that touring in a rent-a-van is not them. With each *this is not* me, they have to decide what *is them*. Or what they really want.

They want to live from their music. They want to get laid more. They want more money. They want to spread their message to more people. I don't know. Maybe, they don't know. They're learning. Picking up the major label, and maybe throwing it down again, like Bad Religion did.

I'm not writing this to criticize Anti-Flag. Any band that uses the words *devise and implement* does not need me to criticize it. Besides, it's *you* I want to talk about. Not *them*. *You* haven't examined life without the teddy bear yet. In fact, you have such a furious grip on it; you can't tell where *you* ends and the bear begins.

Right now, you've gripped your own ideas so tightly that you've made people believe they *are* you. When you finally throw them down, your friends are gonna point their fingers. You may not jump to *Sony*, but you'll have more money—and a family. You'll change your politics. They'll call you a sell-out. You'll throw your friends down too. You'll say you've outgrown them.

Where will it come from, this change? Usually, the move from left to right comes with money and family. If you have money, you want more. You want to keep it, spend it on yourself, not give it to people who don't have money. You want to protect your money and what it's bought. You want to build prisons, keep away foreigners, get the local beggar off the street. You lose track of where you end and where your money begins. You begin to think that because you *worked* you deserve the money. Why should you give it to someone who just sits on the street and asks? Money *is* you. And you don't want to part with it.

And family? The pull of family is so strong Republicans win elections by appealing to it. Disney sells stock with it. When you have a family—especially kids—the family is first. Everything else be damned.

I love my family. Sometimes they piss me off. Sometimes they annoy me, but I still am happy when I see them and am sad when one kicks the bucket. But they are not me. When I travel, I leave them behind. When I'm home, they're a burden more than an asset. People say *blood is thicker than water*. Maybe. But is blood thicker than ink? I dunno.

So what am I? What are the closest things to me? As I type this, I think about what's close. My boots, my jeans, my Stackers T-shirt?

It's clear I'm not my clothes. I can take them off—and do, more often than most people would want. But my clothes are a choice. They come from somewhere inside. They may not me, but they are *of* me. I use Dick Tracy, Lemmy Caution, Mike Hammer, like other punk columnists use me. I choose what I wear because it means something I like. It is *not* me, but it lets people know about me.

Big Mike Loney tells this anecdote:

Mike's working the door at ABC No Rio. Some tall guy with a spiked jacket comes in. Mohawk to here, leather pants, torn Discharge t-shirt, old Doc Martins... the

works. Following him is a rather ordinary-looking guy, California style, loose long shorts, sneakers, a backwards baseball hat. The mohawk guy looks the other guy up and down, then points toward his feet.

"Tube socks!" he says, laughing. "Get this guy. He's wearing tube socks!"

It is funny to imagine the big mohawk lug putting down someone for something so minor. It's funnier to think he even noticed the tube socks. I laughed too. But now that I think about it, I'm not so sure.

The big punk *decided* what he was going to wear. He spent hours on his hair. Every aspect of his appearance was calculated. He had a self-image, *this is me*, and dressed accordingly.

The other guy didn't think twice about his clothes. Tube socks are cheap, so he'll wear 'em. I don't think the big guy was right to laugh, but he *was* more conscious of himself than the littler guy.

Like Mr. Mohawk, *my* clothes are a reflection of what I am. They are the weirdo, the detective, the outsider, the guy who creeps around with a magnifying glass, exposing the wicked, throwing light on the hidden darkness. I am not *only* my clothes, but they are part of me.

So what's the point?

It's that you're stuck with some things, you copy others, and still others you create. The real you is what you choose from among those things. What you allow people to see. What you consider and what you don't. I choose pretty carefully. I choose paths others don't take. I make paths for others to walk on. You're free to walk on them, take another paths or make your own. I'm pretty happy with what I've made, but I don't want to boast.

ENDNOTES: (email subscribers [god@mykelboard.com] or website viewers [www.mykelboard.com] will get a few extra endnotes)

Real vinyl dept: In Vancouver, I discovered a cool vinyl-only record store creatively called *Vinyl*. The owner, David Jones (no, he was *not* in the Monkees) bought at least one of everything I had. He bought two of some. He's interested in building a punk section in his store. Contact him at vinylrecords1@telus.net or 1-604-488-1234.

Credit where it's due dept: When I talked about how I changed the face of zine columns, I did not include two points:

One is that other columnists did not simply imitate me. They used my ideas, or were influenced by those ideas and took them in a new way. Or maybe it's that great minds flow coincidently in the same gutter. Some column writers—even in this zine—have developed a completely unique style, using the tools I brought to column makers. I'm not accusing anyone of plagiarism. The guy who built a bookcase did not *plagiarize* the guy who invented the hammer.

Two is that not *everyone* followed my lead. The Rev. Norb (C.R.I.P.) is *not* often imitated, or copied. But he *is* the most original voice in punkdom. I don't know what his influences are, but he is the king of creativity.

There's racism and then there's racism dept: In April, The Nebraska Legislature voted to divide the Omaha school system into three districts—one black, one white and one Hispanic. Supporters, including the legislature's only black senator, said the plan would give minorities control over their own school board. It would ensure that their children are not "shortchanged" in favor of white youngsters. Gov. Dave Heineman, a Republican, signed the measure into law. Sen. Pat Bourne of Omaha condemned the bill. "We will go down in history as one of the first states in 20 years to set race relations back," the Democrat said. "History will not, and should not, judge us kindly," said another senator. "There is no intent to create segregation," said the black senator. He argued that the district is already segregated, because it no longer buses students and instead requires them to attend their neighborhood school. He said the black students he represents would receive a better education if they had more control over their district.

I say, the whole thing is fucked up and shows that "local control" even at the state level is the *problem*, not the *solution*. How 'bout if America becomes like every other country (G-d forbid!) and has one set of rules for *all* schools? Then we wouldn't have to worry about teaching creationism in Kansas or Ebonics-as-a-second-language in San Francisco. Local control is local *out of control*.

Predicting the unpredictable dept: The US Transportation Security Administration said they were going to lighten up a bit. They'll allow short scissors, and tools in your airplane carry-ons. A return to senses? Not so fast!

The TSA also announces "more frequent searches of body and property at various checkpoints in the airport." This they said will make the skies safer by "incorporating unpredictability" into the airline process.

They want unpredictability? They should hire some terrorists. That'll give 'em unpredictability. Jesus fuckin' Christ. If there's anything airline passengers *don't* want, it's unpredictability.

Tears of joy and sadness dept: It was a great show. A CD release party. 21 of New York's best punk rock bands all on New York Shitty Punk Rock 2005, put out by Attention Punk Records. I got there late, but did manage to see two of my faves: World War IX and the Stackers, plus a new favorite: Blackout Shoppers.

It was a great night; but why all the tears? Especially on those petite and attractive Orientals? It was the Stackers' last show in the US. Their drummer was deported when caught by a roaming border patrol in Texas (expired visa). I guess they were looking for Mexicans. Now, they all decided to return to the rising sun and play there for a while. I'll miss 'em.

Oh yeah, I just had a thought. Motto for Calgary, where Jesus died and was… er… resurrected. *Land of the Rising Son.*

Still recruiting dept. The bisexual email list has been too quiet lately. So, it's time to *recruit*. If you want to participate in our discussions, email: listserv@listserv.brown.edu. The entire message should read: "subscribe bisexu-l"—that should do it. You never know whom you'll meet. And, yes I have, but not often enough.

As if you needed another reason dept: Remember when everyone had AOL? Supposedly the company is still the largest internet provider, but how many people do *you* know with AOL addresses?

Well, for those few, there's another reason to quit. This edited from the *LA Times*:

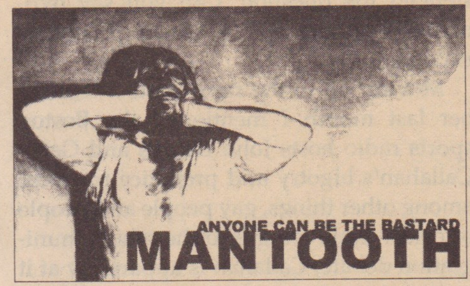
A group of 600 organizations that includes the AFL-CIO and the Gun Owners of America has been circulating an online petition protesting AOL's plans to begin charging extra to route email around its spam filters.

On Thursday, though, the world's biggest internet service provider blocked emails containing links to the petition against the "CertifiedEmail" plan at DearAOL.com.

Yep, AOL reading and censoring your email again. Is it a kind of parental control?

Speaking of censorship dept: The entire internet is under attack by a new law pushed by the big Telcoms. They want to charge a fee to content providers to insure fast and efficient download of their materials. This will destroy the basic equality of the internet and put more power in the hands of a few corporations. (How long before Anti-Flag sings against it?)

You can sign a petition against the thing at: www.SavetheInternet.com



MRR Coordinator Questionnaire:

Who are you anyway and why do you want to be the coordinator of MRR?

I am the night.

I view MRR as my personal Everest. Vast. Big. Steep. Old. Cold. Yeti-ridden. Perhaps blood filled. I was born unto this world with one task in mind: destroy the earth and the wretched sun that controls it. MRR is merely another stepping stone towards total and utter obliteration of the globe. Becoming a columnist was actually the 106th step towards my goal. Breaking edge was 105th and lying on a resume to steal secrets from Olive Garden was 104th. All previous steps are steeped in a mystery-swamp of intrigue and seduction.

I believe that our planet, Earth, is a spherical shit-coffin hurdling through space as if slung by the hand of a merciless, uncaring deity who sits atop a throne of shattered thetan skulls. I take up my task like Jesus took up his cross or like how James Bond once killed a giant poisonous centipede (that had been placed on his heaving man-chest as he slept) by flinging it across the room and squishing it with his trusty spy-shoe. If that doesn't make any sense to you, read the next paragraph.

The reasons behind my contempt for Earth, Sun, and Humanity perhaps are not as mystical as I've previously stated. Perhaps the real reason is that I've got criminally low self-esteem stemming from not being hugged enough as a child. Or perhaps it's because I can't live with the fact that giant, poisonous centipedes live in South America. Have you ever heard of these things? They look just like small centipedes...but...you know...*HUGE*. Not only that, but they're fucking poisonous. I saw a video of one killing a mouse. And you know what it did with it afterwards? It drank its fucking blood. Two and a half foot long insect that drinks blood. Do I need any more reason to blow up this planet and everything in its immediate surroundings?

Or perhaps I'm just a victim of *government mind control* attempting to infiltrate a subversive youth culture (anarchy, peace, skulls, two fingers in the air, punk, shit) and it's most popular (?) DIY publication? Perhaps my hand is being guided by insidious forces deep beneath the Pentagon, forcing me to type this gibberish in an attempt to hypnotize you, sending your brain spiraling into a subterfuge of mental humiliation, incarceration, debilitation, and inconvenience. Can you feel the CIA's filthy digits rustling through your grey matter???

What do you like about MRR?

My father gave me a great deal of advice as a child. One day he sat me upon his lap and pushed me off immediately. Do you know what I learned that day? Nothing but pain and suffering. I learned that the only thing you can expect in this cold, desolate world is the floor connecting with your stupid face when you least expect it. This is what I like about *MRR*—it's a metaphor for being mistreated by your father.

What would you want to change about MRR?

Right now, aside from Bruce Roehrs, MRR is 99% yob-free. I know that I'm not the only one put off by this devastating statistic. One of the other things my father taught me as a Boytooth was to always remain on the defensive at a job interview. "There is nothing wrong with shaming your way into a position you are dangerously unqualified for," he would say. Thus, I accuse MRR of yob-discrimination.

What are some ideas you have for articles or theme issues?

I got this absolutely brutal idea for a theme issue: *all ghost themed issue*. It'd be totally sick. We'd get someone (brave) to interview a bunch of ghosts and get them to tell us about some of their really scary thoughts on punk and hardcore. It'd go something like this:

MRR: So what are your thoughts on THE SCENE nowadays?

Ghost: WOOoOoooOooOoOOooOoo-OooOoooO!

MRR: Holy fuck! A ghost!

Hopefully, the ghost would not possess all readers and terrorize our minds that are already tortured by government mind control.

What other zines/magazines do you read and like?

Quite fond of reading a zine by some kid in high school who goes by the name Tusk Lord. Not really sure what it's called because he podcasts it into my brain every month. Here's an excerpt:

all thsi bullshit stacks up for years and humans are worthless shit—theyre sellin bottled fear by the crates and youre drinking it you dumbass. you know, i always thought it was funny that they invented corvettes..what ..normal car isn't fast enough? i can't wait for the next models of fast car! :-P get a job and overdose on living. it's a shifting coffin with millions of compartments for lil people and their tragic, happy belongings.

pleasepleaseplease forgive me for the comment about cars i will never do it again please please pleaseplease :-(

all in all, i believe that we're here to stay and there's no stopping us and we have belief in oureslves and we support whats gonna be good and we like do see our thingies come true and most of all our dreams come true!

How would you describe your political beliefs?

My political beliefs are most easily described as a sandwich—nay, a burger—without any Government fixings or spreads. After consuming this "anarchy burger," one would be compelled to go to school naked and say fuck in front of his or her mother. Perhaps on the way to school, this same person would enter a deli and urinate on the cheese.

We need to know a little about your personality.

Half animal, half insane. I got this Pete Rose rookie card for sale if any of you pathetic rubes wants to buy it from me for a lot of money. I got bills to pay!

I don't think I answered this question. Anyway...

Describe your organizational skills and experience in that regard.

I think my highly organized columns perfectly reflect my highly organized lifestyle/deathstyle.

Describe your musical tastes.

"Greg only likes that screamy, 'rahr rahr rahr' music, that's really not music, but just a bunch of dirty people banging on instruments and not really saying words! Ha ha ha!"—Co-workers.

Cro-Mags are over-rated.

Within the punk scene, what individuals or bands do you respect or admire and why?

Anyone who doesn't get excited about Cro-Mags because they're over-rated. *Age of Quarrel* is boring. Righteous Jams do Cro-Mags better than Cro-Mags.

How do you feel about your hometown (or where you currently live) and what would you think about moving to San Francisco? Why would you consider leaving your town to move to SF?

Where does Negative Tom live and how long would it take for me to get to his house from MRR house?

"I think the national anthem ought to be sung in English, and I think people who want to be a citizen of this country ought to learn English, and they ought to learn to sing the national anthem in English"

—George W. Bush

"Callahan said that Latino immigrants "come to our country," "break our laws" and collect "food stamps."

—from John Molori's "Media Blitz" column, 5/2/06

"You come into this country/You can't get real jobs/Boats and boats and boats of you/Go home you fuckin' slobs"

—"Speak English or Die," Stormtroopers of Death

Ah yes... more words of wisdom. It all ties together somehow. You know, I wish I could write about more positive things (I will one of these months, I promise), but for now, we have to deal with the reality of life in the '00s. Which, in a lot of respects, ain't all that different from other decades—and, in fact, things seem to be getting worse concerning some issues.

The above comments all popped into my mind while thinking about the whole undocumented immigrant issue, or, as the less enlightened among us call them, "illegal aliens." Two of these statements have appeared in the week or so before I wrote this column. Of course, the third comes from the infamous SOD album that was released in 1985, and, as I said, some things never change, do they? It's bringing xenophobic and racist sentiments to the surface, although they've never been that submerged to begin with. Those expressions are becoming more brazen of late—or at least I notice it more. I covered these issues in my January column but it's flared up again recently.

So let's break each one down, shall we? Bush's comments came after the release of a Spanish-language version of "The Star Spangled Banner" titled "Nuestro Himno" ("Our Anthem"). The song is performed by an aggregation of Latino artists, as well as Fugees' member Wyclef Jean. Needless to say, many people are livid over the new interpretation of the anthem. Bush made the above statement in reaction to "Nuestro Himno." A recent Gallup poll says that 7 in 10 Americans want the national anthem sung in English. Younger folks are more evenly split but older people favor it by a wide margin. In any case, there seems to be less tolerance for cultural diversity, for different interpretations.

I'm not much for national anthems, myself. If I was going to pick a song to represent America, I'd prefer "This Land Is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie. In any case, I refuse to stand for the anthem or "God Bless America" at baseball games or anywhere else for that matter. I remember being at my sister's college graduation and they played the anthem and I wouldn't rise that time either. I thought my mother was going to burst a blood vessel. I guess she thought I'd embarrass her or we'd all be shipped off to some American gulag or something. That was in 1984, and, needless to say, with the Reagan era well underway, I had my reasons for not standing. In recent years, I've stuck with it.

Still, "Nuestro Himno" does sound like a cool idea, especially if it's enraging the bigots... A *Washington Post* article said it was *"timed to debut the week Congress returned to debate immigration reform, with the country riven by the issue. "Nuestro Himno" is intended to be an anthem of solidarity for the movement that has drawn hundreds of thousands of people to march peacefully for immigrant rights in Washington and cities across the country, says Adam Kidron, president of Urban Box Office, the New York-based entertainment company that launched the project."*

Incidentally, the greatest-ever rendition of the anthem was Roseanne Barr's unforgettable 1990 performance in San Diego before a Padres game. She screeched her way through it and grabbed her crotch and spat (just like most ballplayers) at the end. The spitting part anyway—I immediately think of Red Sox manager Terry Francona. Every time they show him, he has a huge wad of chewing tobacco in his mouth and is seen gobbing. Ugh... Getting back to Roseanne, President George Bush the First called it "disgusting" (like father, like son) and people were outraged. All the more reason to love it.

There's an ironic twist to Dubya's comment that the anthem should be sung in English. During his first Presidential campaign, he apparently sang along with a Spanish language version, according the *New York Post*. I know—it's a rag, but still... At Bush's 2001 inaugural, Jon Secada sang the anthem in both English and Spanish. Of course, the soon-to-be-departed presidential spokesman Scott McClelland sidestepped the question. Can you say hypocrite? I guess it's no longer politically expedient.

Moving on to the next quote... remember last month I mentioned the Boston sports radio hosts John Dennis and Gerry Callahan's bigotry and prejudice towards, among other things, gay people and people of color? Well, tying into the whole immigration debate, Callahan is apparently at it again. Just before the "Day Without Immigrants" protests on May 1, Callahan had some rather obnoxious "pearls of wisdom," according to a column by sports media columnist John Molori. The column said *"May 1st was designated as the day that many Latinos would stay home from work and boycott stores as a demonstration of solidarity. In response last Friday, Callahan said that it would be a day when people who don't work can stay home from work... Callahan said that Latino immigrants "come to our country," "break our laws" and collect "food stamps." During that same show, Callahan referred to the May 1st Latino protest as a "godless Commie day" and said that Communists are "in bed with illegal aliens." When the topic moved to Rosie O'Donnell joining ABCs "The View," Callahan said that she would appeal to the "big fat lesbian crowd"... On Monday, Callahan's venom continued. When the conversation turned to Latino health care, Callahan stated, "If you've been to an emergency room lately, you know where they go."*

I don't think any further comment is necessary. I imagine it's not that much different from anything you hear on right-wing blowhard radio but this is a top-rated radio show and it's sickening to think their ratings probably won't suffer because of the statements. If anything, I can imagine a lot of their white, male, conservative audience nodding their heads in agreement.

Finally, "Speak English or Die." Fucking brilliant. I have the press sheet for that album right here (yes, I still have the LP—got it for free back then). The sheet says it's the *"ULTIMATE blending of "Hard Core Punk" and the "New World of Thrash Metal."* It goes on to say, *"One thing to keep in mind is the very special style of tongue in cheek humor along with the intelligence."* Intelligence? Tongue-in-cheek? Are you out of your fucking mind? With these lines (in addition to the ones above)? *"Nice fuckin' accents/why can't you speak like me? What's that dot on your head/do you use it to see?"* Yeah, brilliant. And the only reason I bring it up is because a lot of people have that mentality today, so I suppose it's timeless in a way.

Immigration is becoming an internation-

al issue as countries in the European Union attempt to emulate the United States. I have the new Skitsystem album on (I review it below) and there's a song that translates into "The Suffering of the Consciousless Hate." Kind of a clumsy translation but the message rings loud and clear. In the notes that accompany the song, it reads, "The governments within the EU are struggling for more controlled borders, less immigration and sometimes even an open racist ideology." I also recently read about racist attacks in Germany and that's causing concern about the upcoming World Cup soccer tournament. Nazis beat an Ethiopian into a coma. The *Globe* article says, *"The Easter morning assault here, in which the 37-year-old irrigation engineer was harangued with racial epithets then bludgeoned and kicked into a coma, was one of hundreds of racial attacks in the former East Germany since reunification of the country in 1990, according to German law enforcement agencies and European groups that track hate crimes. Police blamed neo-Nazi thugs for the Potsdam attack. It was followed by the beating Wednesday of an Arab man at a bus station in eastern Berlin. The crime, also thought to be the work of neo-Nazis, was described by police as an "anti-foreigner" attack... The attacks have raised fresh alarms about violent far-right groups as the country prepares to host its largest sports spectacle since the 1972 Munich Olympics, when eleven Israeli athletes died in an attack by Palestinian terrorists."*

Sad, isn't it?

MUSIC REVIEWS: (Note: Yes, these reviews are all positive. I don't love everything I get, but prefer to give the coverage towards releases I think you should check out.)

ABDUCTEE SD – *Won't Stand Down* (Punks Before Profits, LP)
This LP was released on CD awhile back and PBP make it available on vinyl. Loud, impassioned punk by these three women, one of whom is former Spider Cunt/present Imperial Leather vocalist Amyl Nitrate. An old school buzz mixing '77-era catchiness, early-'80s UK inspiration, and a bit of Bikini Kill's punkier side. The lyrics approach a number of gender/feminist issues from a personalized perspective. Rough and raw. (537 Caroline St., Rochester, NY 14620, punksbeforeprofits@hotmail.com)

AUKTION – *D-Beat R'n'R Mayhem* (Wasted Sounds, CD)
Dual-vocal rockin' rollin' hardcore from Scandinavia. It starts with a parody of the intro to Black Sabbath's first album but that's the only commonality, as the boogie riffage soon takes over. In the same vein as Uncurbed, *et al*. Speed and aggro but also playing up the love for metallic rock. You might think it's a case where the guys only want to rock out but the lyrics reveal a strong social conscience—homophobia, the surveillance state, gender roles, etc. They also do a cover of Anti-Cimex's "Raped Ass"—sort of. It's re-titled "Raped Ass Part II," with different music. (www.wastedsounds.com)

BLACK SS / RAINING BRICKS – split (Organized Crime, 7" EP)
At the moment, Black SS can really do no wrong. Blazing hardcore, same as on their album—impressive bellowing from Chuck and guitars cranked up really high (where have I heard that before?). Two originals and a cover of the Ramones' "Teenage Lobotomy." Raining Bricks have more of a rock 'n roll meets hardcore punk sound. The vocals are gruff but a tad off-key and that's compensated for by the scorching riffs. (PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513, www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

BLOOD OF CHRISTIAN CHILDREN – *8 Tracks EP* (self-released, 12" EP)
Whoa... I love it when a record shows up from a band I wasn't familiar with and they hit me right between the ears. This EP starts with a horrific sound collage of static and feedback and then the wailing begins. Explosive, apocalyptic hardcore punk with razorblade guitars and howling vocals that are covered up a bit by the fray—but the desperation is still felt. Production is raw and trebly and that gives it more edge. Mainly delivered at a fast pace, but "March to Isengard," taken from a Tolkien passage, slows it down to a heavier boil. Well-read ragers! (Bill Dillon, 36 S. 4th St. D-2, Brooklyn, NY 11211)

BRAIN HANDLE (self-released, 7" EP)
Three shorter songs on one side, and on the flip, the sole track "Cold Pavement" takes a slow and intense route with some Flag-ish guitar lines. The other three songs vary from thrash parts to medium-speed segments. A darkness in the sound, mixing it up and doing it well. (PO Box 10223, Pittsburgh, PA 15232)

CONVERSIONS/WITCHES WITH DICKS – split (It's Not a Phase, Dad, 7" EP)
Two bands that are different stylistically but each have plenty of energy. Conversions are a relatively new hardcore band who have a clean guitar sound and add a rhythmic complexity to the aggression. Terry's vocals are scalding and angry, and when they play live, she likes to get up in people's faces and engage in stare-downs. Witches With Dicks, a pop/punk trio, approach their music differently but it's just as impassioned—late-'80s/early-'90s Bay Area punk mix with the full-on sound of Dillinger Four. Both songs are super-catchy and "Your Job Does Not Rock Balls" expresses a timeless theme. This pairing works very well. (2 Hano St., Allston, MA 02134, christopherstrunk@yahoo.com)

CROSS EXAMINATION – *The Hung Jury* (Organized Crime, CD)
Crossover is *back*. From this St. Louis band's logo to the bloody skeleton as judge layin' down the justice on the cover, this band has the thrash-maniac sound down perfectly. Much like Municipal Waste and Holier Than Thou, it's a full-speed explosion of speed blending the fury of both hardcore and 80s-era thrash metal. Lyrics with a wise-guy party-hearty attitude. Even the so-called message songs have a sarcastic wit. They tack on an earlier demo and there's approximately 15 minutes of live clips. (PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513, www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES (Fashionable Idiots, 7" EP)
Four more ragers for this impressive Minneapolis band. Only one song breaks the one-minute mark but no one will feel cheated. Just play it again. Same method—non-distorted guitar, trebly sound—and they have it nailed. Sure, they draw from the past, there's a retro flavor, but it's still a bit different from the early-'80s bands. (www.fashionableidiots.com)

HOLY MOUNTAIN – *Enemies* (No Idea, CD)
This disc features half a dozen new songs, an earlier EP, and a couple of live songs. Crusty hardcore with metallic overtones and political lyrics. "The Will of the People" does offer a more positive message. The earlier tracks have a stripped-down, somewhat thin production and the band sound as though they were finding their footing, but it's still pretty good. They've definitely improved since then and it's a hard-hitting sound. (PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604, www.noidearecords.com)

I OBJECT – *Teaching Revenge* **(Black Noise/Alternative Tentacles, CD/LP)**
Let's hear it for youthful idealism. This is I Object's first full-length album (well, if full-length is 19 minutes) after a lengthy discography of 7"s and splits (anthologized on Punks Before Profits: www.punksbeforeprofits.com). Thashy hardcore in a stripped-down form and Barb shouts the with the zeal of a true believer. Punk, at its best, has been an outlet for the outsiders, the put-upon, the ones who got bullied in school, and those feelings come to the fore, while exploring past events and dealing with finding one's way through life after hitting the 20s. The note accompanying "To Whom It May Concern" talks about how writing lyrics or zines, etc. can "provide an important personal release in which we can vent our own frustrations." Hear hear! This band has come a long way over the past few years. (PO Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141, www.alternativetentacles.com)

MOUTH SEWN SHUT – *Pandemic = Solution* **(Rodent Popsicle, CD)**
A new band for Bill and Will from Toxic Narcotic, joined by a different bass-player and drummer. At first listen, the fast, aggressive songs don't sound far removed from TN; nor does the lyrical cynicism, although "Prove Them Wrong" encourages resolve in the face of adversity. Bill's vocals remain the same; the guitar sound just as slashing. One difference, though, is the songs that merge the raw sound with a reggae inflection (TN also explored this a bit). In any case, it's the same undiluted, pile-driving approach. (PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

PERMANENT TRIP (CD-R demo)
A new band with Nate from Devoid of Faith/John Brown's Army/etc., and it's a full-on attack. Aggressive hardcore that has a speedy rush along with some slower moments. Jay's vocals are spat out with guttural rage. Four songs that flow into each other without a break. Is bruising an overused term? It fits here. Good debut. (858 Warren St., Albany, NY 12208, 946jkrak@gmail.com)

POISON CONTROL (cassette demo)
There have been some killer bands from Boston forming over the past year or so and Poison Control certainly falls into that category. A five-piece playing solid, straight-ahead punk with garage and rock 'n' roll touches. A lyrical split between political topics, such as the conspiracy-oriented "Human Targets" and "Norms Out," along with personal reminiscences delivered by Dan Wars with up-front forcefulness. I can't wait for some vinyl from these guys. (Regeneration Records, 155 Harvard Ave., Allston, MA 02134, rossnoyes@yahoo.com)

SKITSYSTEM – *Stigmata* **(Havoc, LP/CD)**
Dark, rumbling, overpowering, and as far as I can tell, the first Skitsystem LP since 2001 (there have been reissues, EPs, and comp appearances since then). The passage of time hasn't softened them one bit. Non-stop aggression, with guitars, bass and drums cranking it out fiercely along with vocal howlings from two of 'em. Low-tuned guitars increase the heaviness quotient but the songs are fast and pulverizing. The words are in Swedish but there are English summaries and Skitsystem take on some intense subjects—sexual assault, suicide, and racism towards immigrants. The suicide theme is presented in haunting fashion on the cover and in a larger form on the poster insert. Chilling and intense. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)

VICTIMS – *Divide & Conquer* **(Havoc, LP/CD)**
The killing continues. Yeah, I'm borrowing a bit from a Discharge title and that's certainly an influence here, but only an influence, not a copy. Motörhead also figures into the equation (particularly on "The Night Driving Toll"). More raw Swedish hardcore with scorching guitar licks, solid rhythmic backup, and screamin' vocals that cut through the blaze. After the semi-disappointing split with From Ashes Rise, Victims has been back on the path of destruction for their last two albums and they really brought it live when I saw them recently. (PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrecords.com)

THE YOUTHS (CD-R demo)
What's a Yoot? Come on, did you think I could let this review go by without that line from *My Cousin Vinny?* This Portuguese band proclaims that in the opening song, chanting "We're the Youths" repeatedly, and it *does* sound like "yoot." I'll stop being a wise-ass now because this a damn good demo. Jabbing '77 meets garage punk with a clean guitar sound and snotty, cheap-mic vocals. "Decontrol" has some nifty handclaps as well. There's also a bit of an artsy element without being pretentious about it. Such a basic approach and it fucking *works*. (theyouths@gmail.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903/email: suburbanvoice@earthlink.net/Sonic Overload radio: http://sonicoverload.moocowrecords.com

This month I'd like to talk about the less-than-glamorous subject of fanzine advertising. In the early days of punk, there was little coverage from the music press. Fans soon started publications of their own to focus on the new media. Some of the early zines such as *Sniffin' Glue, Search and Destroy,* and *Punk* established a template for an independent punk music press that expanded exponentially with the rise of hardcore in the early 1980s. Hardcore, despite the fact that it spread like wildfire in the early '80s received virtually no coverage even in the "alternative" music press of the day. Indeed, to this day, documentaries and cultural studies of punk typically leap from 1979 to 1991 ("the year punk broke") with little or no mention of the huge hardcore scene extant from '79 to today. A major reason for this might be that rock critics, music journalists, and the like have consistently ignored hardcore, and there is almost no published work outside of underground fanzines that deals with this scene.

This factor has in turn opened the field to several generations of hardcore punk publications. In the early '80s, two magazines in particular arose to document the new scene: *Maximum Rocknroll* and *Flipside.* Also of note were many other zines like *Ink Disease, Ripper, Your Flesh, XXX, Suburban Voice,* and many more. Often these had a regional or local focus while *MRR* had the "commanding heights" of truly global coverage. In those days, with hardcore marginalized as it was, the only places to hear about new bands were free-form college radio, fanzines and tape trading. Ads and reviews in fanzines were the primary way people found out about new releases and bands. For many years, an *MRR* ad and review alone were the main method for promoting an independent release. In fact, for many years people commonly said they bought *MRR* "only for the ads." The classifieds in *MRR* and *Flipside* were also clear-

inghouses for tape and record trading.

I recently had as a guest on my radio show an ex-member of Civil Defense. CD was a punk band from St. Paul in the early '80s who has gone largely unsung despite their great catchy songs. Drummer Mike Reiter told me that the band existed in sort of a middle ground in the local scene at the time. Their Clash/Jam-inspired punk sound didn't fit in with the local hardcore thrash scene or the artier punk crowd. They self-released a 12" then broke up soon after. As Mike related was common at the time, they sent out dozens of copies to fanzines for review. In those days zines usually ran the postpaid price and address with the review. Given the sporadic publication schedule of most zines at the time, they found that it took about four to six months for word to get out about their record. By then the band had broken up and members had moved on to new projects. But as the reviews and orders started to come in they realized there was a lot of interest in their sound around the country. In hindsight if they had stayed together they could have pressed more records and toured on that delayed response. This kind of lag time is something I hear people from the '80s talk about quite often. It was not uncommon for a band to wait to tour for six months after a new release to promote that record, in order to give it time to get reviewed in zines and filter out to distributors.

I can remember when I started doing a label and distro that the *MRR* ad and review was the main avenue for generating orders. There were hundreds of punks in the '80s who lived from issue to issue and eagerly scanned every new copy of *MRR* with a stack of envelopes and money orders to pick up new releases. I would know a new issue of *MRR* was out even before my subscription copy had arrived when letters started to show up at my PO Box with money for the new releases. I also can remember stores and distros turning down picking up copies of my new releases saying they wanted to "wait a while until more ads and reviews have run" so they weren't taking a chance on a record no one knew about yet.

As with many areas of the hardcore scene in recent years, the advent of the internet has changed—and indeed reversed—most all of these factors. Today, there are many fewer zines of substance than there were in the '80s when the scene was arguably numerically smaller. For sure, there are lots of zines these days—but only a handful that command a following and have the name recognition and publishing regularity to provide somewhat timely and informed commentary on more than a tiny slice of today's underground music scene.

The internet has democratized information and distribution to such an extent that very few people still rely on fanzines for information. Fewer still rely on zines for ordering new releases. The four-to-six-month lag time we discussed above has been virtually eliminated. These days the most sought after releases are pressed in such limited editions and distributed through such limited channels that they are invariably sold out before even a monthly magazine like *MRR* comes to print. The sluggish publishing schedule of most other zines means their review sections read like ancient history with releases from as long as a year past. This acceleration of culture has certainly led to a "dumbing down" of the discourse in hardcore as well. With commercial websites and messageboards as the main forums for conducting information, there is very little in the way of in-depth reportage, interviews, or other articles that integrate anything into a "big picture." Critics will argue that the messageboard gives the reader the chance to rebut that they never had when dealing with a fanzine editor. But in the past most zines had a letters column for feedback from the readers. The internet practice of letting everyone get their two cents in on every issue rarely leads to anything more readable than an overheard conversation at a keg party. That is to say, the tenor and standard are lowered to match the short attention span and lack of informed discourse common throughout today's mainstream youth culture.

For business and distribution purposes though, the internet has been a real advantage. Costly magazine ads and capricious editors can be sidestepped and replaced by a direct connection to a record's audience. An MP3 can let the listener know exactly what the music sounds like rather than relying on a potentially uninformed or vague reviewer. And ordering is as simple as clicking a few buttons. As a result, the most successful underground labels of the past few years do little or no advertising at all.

On the other hand there are still quite a few larger publications one step up from the DIY fanzine underground that focus on the more commercialized versions of "hardcore, punk, alternative and metal." These are precisely the kind of publications that ignored hardcore in its 1980s heyday. In this world, the standard is high gloss and image over substance. One turns to full-page ad after full-page ad from a predictable stable of major independent labels trumpeting releases that seem to march across the page with a reassuring uniformity. The eyeliner-wearing, sensitive emo-core band in white belts and girl pants, the aggressive metal band splattered in blood, the toughguy hardcore band standing hard amid an urban wasteland. A keen observer will note that the bands featured in the publications "content" reflect almost exactly those bands and labels featured in the advertisements. One also will find a distinct lack of critical reviews, challenging interviews, debate, or commentary of any sort. These trade publications have long ago tied all their reviews and coverage to advertising. Only bands and labels that buy into advertising in a big way get coverage. The proportion of coverage to advertising investment is direct. Therefore, the labels willing to spend the most see their bands the most heavily promoted in the press. This is of course why you never read about great bands like the Observers or Regulations in the glossy music press, but see endless fluff pieces for predictably banal and formulaic bands on labels that "play the game." The irony is that this process is channeled largely through PR agencies and ultimately the labels charge the costs of this promotion back to the bands as "recoupables." Agencies jockey with one another to get the inside track at each magazine, booking and radio agency, and labels hire and fire agencies based on tour turnouts and Soundscan numbers.

Why do I digress into this exposé of the music press? Because in this era the "ceiling" for the DIY underground has been lowered so far that many of the values of this commercialized music scene have crept into the DIY hardcore scene. Labels and publications that once ignored underground hardcore now look at it as an AA league providing potentially new talent on the cheap. Furthermore, many of the players in the music business these days got their start in the hardcore scene of the '80s and '90s.

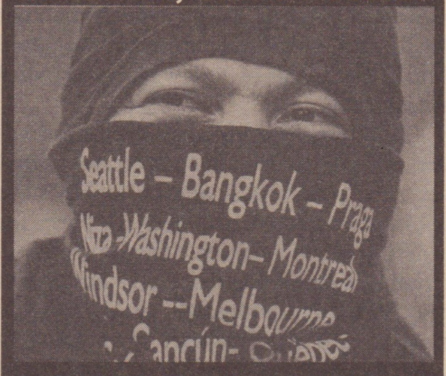
During the punk "boom" of the mid-'90s, *MRR* had a backlog of ads so long that it was compelled to release several double issues just to fit in all the reserved ads. *MRR* was also forced to do away with full, and for a brief time half page ads in order to make room for all the labels that wanted to advertise. While *MRR* is still pretty packed with ads, the months-long backlog is a thing of the past. Most zines report a

shortage of ads and a struggle every issue to get enough to make it worthwhile to print. Most zines of course derive the majority of their income from advertising (as opposed to subscriptions, cover prices, etc.). Most famously, Slug and Lettuce continues to be published for free, with ads as its only source of revenue.

In a world of shrinking sales and internet-based distribution, many labels find advertising to be a difficult balance to strike. On the one hand, there's no way a DIY label can compete with the massive saturation of big budget labels and their PR agencies to get any notice in the wider music press. On the other hand, only *MRR* publishes on a frequent enough schedule to make advertising a new release match today's short attention spans. Most other zines have a hard time keeping to a publishing deadline. The zines are frustrated with the lack of funds coming in from advertisers and the advertisers are frustrated with zines that don't publish until months after they have sent in their now outdated ads. Labels that are struggling to survive find it harder and harder to keep up a regular advertising budget. Likewise, zines find it harder and harder to go to press with dwindling ad revenues. Most labels see little or no feedback from print ads these days. Therefore, most zine advertising is done primarily to support the underground press and to raise the profile of the label. I can't remember the last time I ordered a record from a fanzine ad, but I do notice which labels are advertising and that name recognition is sure to enter into the conscious mind at some point for most people. One might not order the record from seeing the ad, but you might see it in a record store or distro and make the connection.

Even in the internet era, zines are a necessity. They are the permanent record of the music scene, one month at a time. The reviews, opinions, articles, and interviews can be crafted at a depth usually not seen on the internet. It's probably good that weak zines get weeded out, just like a lot of weak bands and labels need to get weeded out. But a well-done zine stands on its own just like a classic record. Advertising in said zines doesn't need to be tied to reviews, generating orders, or anything other than just letting people know your label or band supports that zine. That said, it's on the zine publishers to deliver content that's worth picking up in an era of information saturation and short attention spans.

Go Team, Smash State!



"Lefty" Hooligan • What's Left?

This column was inadvertently left out of issue #277:

Tim Yohannan's legacy, the one I'm sure he'd like to be remembered for and the one that continues to be embodied in collective enterprises like 924 Gilman Street and Maximum Rocknroll, is DIY, anti-major label, independent punk rock. The MRR honchos are devoting a couple of issues to updating Tim's infamous "Major Label Issue," and the emphasis seems to be narrowly focused on what does a DIY/anti-major label/independent stance mean for punk today. As if such a political position can stand alone. That it didn't for Tim Yo, who saw it as part of a much larger political picture, is often forgotten.

What is also not often mentioned is that Tim was a pretty hardcore Leftist, of the Maoist persuasion. He ran MRR like a well-oiled machine, and had no qualms about being dictatorial when needed. At the December 1992 General Meeting, he launched what I like to call "the great purge." I'll save the details for another column, but essentially Tim eliminated three-quarters of the music MRR would review because he no longer considered it punk. At the same time he fired Jeff Bale as an MRR columnist because Bale was writing rightwing tripe. After the great purge, Tim confided that he'd done both things in one meeting on purpose.

"I combined an attack on the right with an attack on the left," he told me, with obvious satisfaction. "I cut down the stuff we would review as punk, knowing that Jeff would be one hundred percent behind my decision. At the same meeting I took out Jeff. I played the right and the left against each other, just like Stalin."

Tim was serious. He was a full-fledged Stalinist, and proud of it. His support for DIY/anti-major label/independent punk politics should be understood with this in mind.

Like much of '60s radicalism in general and groups like the RCP in particular, Tim had an overweening faith in the potential of "rebellious youth" and of youthful subculture. Jay Kinney once wrote: "The association of a visceral anarchy with the Punk movement swelled the ranks of anarchist circles for much of the eighties, but hitching one's wagon to the wild horses of youth is implicitly not a long-term strategy, as the proponents of a radical youth culture discovered in the sixties." For Tim, DIY/anti-label/independent punk politics were a means to tame those wild horses. They were a set of tactics to organize the punk rock scene into a community, and to reach out to other groups in society, such as small record store and newsstand owners, in order to build a power base that could take on and fight the corporate music industry. Tim Yo was not interested in ethical punk business practices, or in moralistically doing the right thing. Tim was interested in power.

I can't say that, nowadays, I agree with much of what Tim was trying to do. I have serious doubts about holding up punk youth as any kind of revolutionary anything, and I'm critical of the cross-class popular frontism of his approach. The whole DIY/anti-major labor/independent music thing seems far less of a threat to the corporate music industry than Tim had imagined. Even if the independents avoid becoming a farm league for the majors, it would be easy enough for the music industry to corral the rebellious elements onto an indie reservation, a quaint "ethical enterprise zone" if you will, where folks can feel good about the music they make, sell or buy because its all DIY. What's actually a threat to the music industry, what might even bring it down—mass piracy—is seen, not as a viable tactic, but as an ethical dilemma for independent, DIY, anti-major label punk rock.

Tim Yo was spot on about power, however. People committed to DIY punk rock independent of the corporate music industry should not be asking themselves whether what they are doing is a better way to do business. Rather, what they should be asking is whether what they are doing is the most effective way to gain real power. Not the power of the market, of how many units are sold, how many people are employed, and how much profit is made. Not the power of the lyrics or the music or the ideas or the fashions or the attitude. Not the power of punk rock's inspiring example. What I mean by real power is social power, the collective power to change the music industry, or society at

large.

Without a focus on power, DIY/anti-major label/independent punk rock is just another business strategy, yet another business model to be taught at Harvard's business school.

This concludes my ruminations on the subject. I've thought a lot about my early days at MRR, when Tim was still alive, to write these past two columns. Damn, I still miss the crotchety old bastard.

This is the column for issue #278:

Today both communism and fascism, ideologies that the French fascist Robert Brasillach once called "the two poetries" of the 20th century, seem exhausted given the triumph of multinational capitalism. Yet periods of ideological decay often breed strange new variants, such as the "Red-Brown alliance" in the former Soviet Union, which do not easily fit into conventional political-science categories of "left" and "right." [...] *What is especially worrisome is that much of the left has today so deteriorated that it may well lack the capacity for understanding, much less fighting, new forms of fascism that incorporate "leftist" rhetoric and ideas.*

Kevin Coogan
Dreamer of the Day:
Francis Parker Yockey and
the Postwar Fascist International

I attended the San Francisco Anarchist Book Fair on March 18. I helped the Insane Dialectical Posse staff several tables and I must say that the rich and powerful are sleeping easy, knowing that this is what anarchism amounts to. There were individuals and groups in attendance with potential, but for the most part the event was a lifestyle exhibition. Most of the turnout was young and the majority of the youth were punks. Watching the fashion show on parade, I was reminded of Mykel Board's famous line: "You'll be selling insurance when you're my age."

The book fair experience actually made me feel a little sad. I was once an anarchist myself. I stopped considering myself one in part because of anarchism's inability to come to terms with the issue of power. The Spanish Civil War is particularly rife with examples of anarchism's failure to deal with power, from the July Days of 1936 to the May Days of 1937. Then there is the utter meaninglessness of the term anarchism when just about anyone can call themselves an anarchist and get away with it. So now we have anarcho-capitalism, type three anarchism, anarcho-primitivism, post-left anarchism, even fascist national anarchism. I could go on, but I won't. Slagging off anarchism often feels like shooting pen-raised quail. There's no sport in it. And it doesn't make me any less sad for something I identified with for some fifteen years of my life.

An anarcho-dilettante at the book fair did call my columns "sectarian rants." This from an asswipe who, a year and a half ago, attempted to stir up shit by using my June 2004 column criticizing the local left communist milieu to foment non-existent antagonisms between me and some of my ultraleft comrades. Like his grasp of most things political, his understanding of sectarianism is feeble at best. A simple search of Wikipedia would have helped straighten him out. As a pejorative, sectarianism refers to a rigid adherence to a particular sect or party or denomination. Within the sect in question, it is often characterized by dogmatism and inflexibility; sentimental or axiomatic adherence to an idea, belief or tradition; and idealism that provides a sense of continuity, orientation, and certainty. Sectarianism frequently implies discrimination, denunciation, or violence against those outside the sect, and takes the form of hatred and fear of outside sects or groups.

The sectarian label is usually applied to such behavior within a clearly defined tradition or tendency. When Protestants and Catholics massacre each other in Northern Ireland, it's considered sectarian violence because both are Christian. When Christians, Muslims, and Jews bludgeon each other in the Middle East though, it's not sectarian so much as intercommunal violence, even though all three are closely related monotheistic religions that claim Abraham as their founder. When Sunni and Shiite Muslims slaughter each other in Iraq, that's sectarian. When Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs butcher each other in India, that's intercommunal. Clearly there's a spectrum here, but the more the folks killing each have in common, the more accurately the violence can be termed sectarian.

The general rule of thumb seems to be: the greater the antagonism over the smaller the difference, the more it can be called sectarian. This sliding rule also holds true for political sectarianism as an extreme form of political conflict generally. Trotskyist groups squabbling amongst themselves is obviously sectarian. The warfare between various Leninist tendencies (Stalinist, Trotskyist, Maoist, Castroist) is less sectarian, and the fights between assorted Marxist currents (Leninist, social democratic, DeLeonist, left communist) are even less so. Least sectarian of all are conflicts between broad schools on the Left (Marxists, anarchists, syndicalists, democratic socialists). Needless to say, at best this is a somewhat slippery measure of sectarianism.

Key to the notion of sectarianism however is belonging to a sect, or at least being committed to a rigid ideology, that one believes in unconditionally and for which one is willing to attack others. I have no such correct political line, nor do I claim to have any kind of ultimate political truth to impart to others. I no longer call myself a left communist, even though I still consider myself on the fringes of that fairly nebulous milieu. I do come to the defense of ultraleft comrades when they are attacked, as was the case when multicultural-identity politics-PC types tried to hijack the flying picket solidarity action with local striking hotel workers. But I am quite critical of Marxism, and of the ultraleft, as the above-mentioned anarcho-poseur is well aware from trying to use my criticisms to alienate my friends.

While I no longer know what needs to be done, I do have a pretty good idea of what doesn't work, or what's just plain ridiculous, thanks to decades of personal experience and reading a lot. What's more, I do not suffer fools lightly. Nor am I shy about voicing my criticisms of asshole individuals or organizations. Folks generally enjoy my acerbic, take-no-prisoners approach, until of course I gore their favorite ox. Those who appreciate my ripping Leninism a new one take offense when I turn on anarchism. Those who chuckle when I shred Larry Livermore's neo-conservative idiocy get indignant when I skewer Chris Crass's anarcho stupidity.

There are individuals I admire, actions I consider important, movements I believe are crucial, and theory I find enlightening. I do use my column to highlight these. Such occasions of praise and recommendation are few and far between though because, to paraphrase Theodore Sturgeon's famous law, "90% of everything is crap." That means that 90% of the Left is crap as well. And let me clue you in. I feel absolutely no obligation to hold my punches and mute my criticisms of some troglodyte Leninist (or anarchist for that matter) simply because he says we're really on the same side fighting the same enemy and calls me comrade.

A correspondent who admired my takedown of various Leninist groups and parties once remarked that I was like a Leftist

Consumer Reports, trying to keep my readers from buying lemons. More recently, an emailer called me an ultraleft Simon Cowell for my caustic commentary. I think the point is in the title of my column, "What's Left?" I'm doing my best to separate wheat from chaff on the Left to see what remains. In some small way, I think of my efforts as counteracting the further deterioration of the Left described by Kevin Coogan.

Actually, speaking of Tim Yo these past two columns in connection with DIY/anti-major label punk politics, he had a lot to do with "Lefty" Hooligan's scathing attitude. I wrote a couple of guest columns that Tim liked, so he asked me to do a regular column of newsy tidbits in an aggressive, abrasive, three-dot-journalism style for MRR's original news section. When he eliminated the news section, he promoted me to full columnist because I'd kicked up enough controversy with my news pieces. The more shit my columns raised, the more Tim liked them. I've tried to keep it punk ever since. So, to those who ask "where's the love?" I say "fuck that hippie shit!"

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@mac.com.

Seven Days, a Lifetime and 6,000 Miles

Monday, April 17

I am at the San Francisco airport, waiting. Thinking of my conversation with the cab driver as we skipped down the highway going south under a bright blue sky with splashes of white clouds. He is from Brazil, and I am from Boston—and we talked about San Francisco. He said that time, here, seems to move so fast. There is the sensation that life moves quickly; a year goes by like nothing, a passing breeze. In Brazil, he told me, everyone takes an hour for lunch, and he would always take a nap. It sounded nice and relaxing, a good way to live. Here, lunch is a quick thirty minutes and then, like everyone else, he is off in his cab to rush again. I feel the same way. Life goes by so quickly–even when the days are full and busy. But maybe it *is* the hurry, the speed of life in the city, that makes the days and weeks and months race too quickly past.

Life becomes a colorful blur, and I take notes as the velocity roars.

Monday, May 1, Mayday

(A segue in my traveling tale.)

"What does it mean when the police of this city, on this evening, rattle along in their patrol wagons? What does it mean when the militia stands warlike and ready for bloody work at our armories? What are the gatling guns and cannons for? Is this military display of barbarism arranged for your entertainment?

"All these preparations, my friends, are *made on your behalf.*

"Your masters have perceived your discontent. They do not like discontented slaves. They want to make you contented at all hazards, and if you are stubborn they will force or kill you."

August Spies spoke these words on May 4, 1886, during the Haymarket rally in Chicago, as workers demanded their rights and an eight-hour workday. Not long after his speech, a bomb was thrown and exploded in the crowd. One police officer was killed by the bomb, and in the resulting melee, six policemen died and sixty others were injured—most of them shot by other police officers, victims of "friendly fire." No official count was made of the several civilian deaths or injuries, as most likely friends or relatives carried them off immediately.

In the wake of the tragedy, well-known anarchists, socialists, and union organizers were rounded up and arrested. In November of 1887, George Engel, Adolf Fischer, Albert Parsons, and August Spies himself would meet their deaths at the gallows of the state, convicted *not* of throwing the bomb—of which the state lacked evidence—but of conspiracy.

The final words August Spies spoke before his execution: "The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today."

One hundred and twenty years into the future, his statement rings true. Since the 1890s, Mayday has commemorated the Haymarket martyrs who were executed for their anarchist ideas, and has become an international day of action and solidarity. Anna Key, who edited *Mayday and Anarchism*, put it well, "The world has changed since the 1880s—but the more things change, the more they stay the same. We still live in a world where exploitation rules, and where the police and media are tools in the hands of the rich and powerful." Exploitation may still rule the day, but as then, resistance to the US capitalist system continues. Workers continue to demand justice, despite threats from bosses, police, and federal agents.

This Mayday, I was in San Francisco. Outside the Federal Building downtown, a noisy and energetic crowd of thousands of people were demanding amnesty for all undocumented immigrants and an end to racist US border policies. There were colorful banners, homemade signs, chants, music, singing and speakers on a large stage. The energy was high. The protest was part of a national day of action across the US calling for "No Work, No School, No Sales, and No Buying. No Person Is Illegal!" I saw many shops in the city closed in solidarity, and actions, events, and rallies were carried out throughout the Bay Area, including a large march and rally in Oakland. According to one of the organizing groups, www.NoHR4437.org, during the day tens of millions of immigrants, activists and supporters took to the streets across the country. Millions demonstrated in New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles. Boston also had a large rally of over a thousand people, and two hundred other cities had protests calling for full rights for immigrants and the end of persecution of immigrant communities.

It was heartening to see so many people protesting out on the streets in San Francisco, and to know that people were doing the same around the country. But surrounding this loud and colorful crowd, there were hundreds of police officers. Large guns, paddy wagons, motorcycles, cars, trucks, metal barricades, cops standing in rows around the building and down the side streets, their weapons at the ready. For a peaceful protest, why such an enormous show of police force and intimidation? I thought again of the words of August Spies, "Your masters have perceived your discontent." Our history continues—another chapter in the endless global struggle, fighting for our lives and freedom.

Monday, April 17

(Continued)

A few hours later, I am in the air, above the clouds, looking out over the Pacific. We

fly over San Francisco, and I can see how small the city really is. Seven miles by seven miles, surrounded by water on three sides, a city on the edge of the world. The trees of Golden Gate Park make an impressive strip of green—cutting through the mind-numbing modern grid. The park runs west to Ocean Beach, and the waves look ferocious from the air. Time and space continue to collapse, and now I am looking out over the Sierra Nevada Mountains—sharp tall edges with black pine trees scattered on blinding white snow. It doesn't look real.

Beyond the mountains, everything becomes the color of sand and dirt. Dry erosion and water channels, like ancient arteries and veins, run down from the hills into the valleys. I am awed by the emptiness. This is the Great Basin, the largest desert in the US, a wild expanse four times the size of England. Native cultures have survived here for centuries, even in a climate where the average rainfall is four inches a year. The plane circles Las Vegas, my connection point east. Las Vegas is a town built of greed and instant gratification, designed by the mafia as a place to take your money, and where tourists can pay to forget their lives—if only for a weekend. In the middle of this massive desert there are palm trees and green golf courses, luxury hotels and swimming pools—the result of millions of gallons of water and oil. Snake eyes.

Tuesday, April 18

I am lying in my comfortable bed, in my green room at the old La Rivolta house. Bright sun hits against black curtains. I am back in Boston. I am back home, back in time, on the edge of change. Last night I arrived, and seeing Tara and Gro sitting in the kitchen was such a sweet sight. Matt and John arrived later, and it was so good to catch up with all of them, to talk late into the night until we all had to surrender and go to sleep.

I made the trip east in order to visit friends, go to the New England Anarchist Book Fair, and deal with my things. I have seven days to sort, organize, throw away and pack up what remains of my 14 years of living in Boston. The timing was also excellent—spring! I was soon sitting on the concrete stoop of an apartment building on Commonwealth Ave, eating a poppy bagel from Bagel Rising and drinking coffee, the daffodils singing yellow in the breeze. I ignored the "Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted" sign and enjoyed the shade of the canopy, watching students, dogs and punks walk by. There are purple flowers on the rhododendron bushes and green buds on the trees. A warm breeze, short sleeves and sunglasses, and I am so glad to be here for my favorite season. Then—a ride downtown. (Thanks so much to Gro and Tara for letting me borrow their bikes while I was in town, I don't know what I would do without you.) I took my usual route into the city: a quick ride through Kenmore and Back Bay, amused by the honking cars. The buses were bigger than I remembered, and of course, no bike lanes. Through the Commons and past Park Street. Wandering through old routes, I love the odd twists of downtown, the back alleys and colonial architecture. There were tulips outside the evil Bank of America building, and business people and tourists on the sidewalks. I went to Long Wharf, where I have spent so much time looking out to sea. I circled the large stone compass needle in the cement, pointing north. It was still cold and gray there, a sharp breeze coming off the bay.

At Winthrop Square, Howe was there and so was Frenchie. We hung out, talking, passing the time. More messengers arrived and left; it was cool to see everyone who survived the winter, and I got to hear all the funny stories since I've been gone. It was good to see Brendan Burk! and his brown Surly. He said I should tell more funny stories in my column, but I just can't get his sarcastic sense of humor down in print—like the one about the rookie who didn't see him outside of 60 State, and crashed into him head-on. The rookie's face went right into Brendan's front basket. Ouch. But luckily—except for a slight dent, the basket is OK. Ha!

Wednesday, April 19

It is about 2 a.m., long past last call. I am at the Model with Lucho, Mari, Tara, and a whole crew of people, once again talking about everything, catching up, and laughing over cheap beer. John invited a few people back to his apartment for a couple of beers, and here I am, drinking a Miller High Life, glad to see Eli from the Knox and a few other punks. Talking about the Boston scene these days, life, and what they have been up to. Strange thing is, I've been in this room before. Six years ago, I helped throw furniture out of what is now John's bedroom window, during Chris and Jessie's infamous "eviction party." Now, years later, punks rent out the same place. Different year, different people, same room, and not much has changed. Odd.

Today I survived the first 24 hours without a cigarette, after a couple of years of slowly becoming a regular smoker, always carrying a package of Bali Shag in my bag, rolling a smoke every few hours. I hadn't planned on quitting, but I woke up feeling sick, I was coughing and snot was pouring from my nose. Looking at my cigarettes, I just didn't want to smoke, and didn't want to feel any worse. I threw away my cigarettes in the trash. I had been thinking of quitting for the past couple of weeks, as hacking for breath while biking up steep hills in San Francisco was a rude wake-up call to the condition of my heart and lungs. I'd rather be a fast biker than a sick smoker, and my lungs just didn't feel good. Not getting a full deep breath was also worrisome. What had I done to myself? If I didn't stop, what else was going to happen to me?

Friday, April 21

My head is splitting in half. The lines of pain run from my forehead through my skull to the back of my neck. I am on Tara's bike, churning up Commonwealth Ave at half past seven, running late to catch Gro's latest play. Jon was telling me interesting anecdote about his month-long trip to Mexico, and although it is hard to catch him on the phone and the image of a tall pale Englishman and Lily cruising around Mexico looking for vegan food and adventure was definitely a good story, I finally had to let him go. It is opening night of *Cleopatra,* as interpreted by local producer Ryan Landry, and Gro is part of the musical cast. I don't get to see her perform very often, and I didn't want to miss it by showing up late. I had stayed up with friends the night before, catching only about five hours of sleep. All day I was stressed out and packing, and the only things I had to eat were a bagel and two cups of coffee. Added to this, my cold was only getting worse. I cruised through Kenmore Square, sending the bike through traffic, heading towards the Fens. My lungs burned, and it felt like someone kicked me in the chest. I couldn't breathe through my nose. I couldn't tell if it was the cold, or not smoking, or the hangover. It all combined into the perfect storm of shit. I gritted my teeth, breathing through my mouth—coughing and hacking up mucus, turning my head, spitting shit over my right shoulder onto parked cars. A screaming crazy woman on a bike, I felt as though my head was being crushed and my lungs and throat were set on fire with rubbing alcohol. Damn. But I arrived on time, sweating as I waited in line at the Machine for my ticket. The musical was fantastic, and I laughed through my fever, a Cape Cod somewhat helping the headache. The whole play was a musi-

cal, and Cleopatra was played by Afrodite, a very tall and very fabulous black man in drag.

After the play, Gro and I ended up at the bar, drinking free vodka samples and graciously accepting drinks from her fellow cast members. We talked about our lives, caught up, and found truth. This moment, sharing our hopes and demons, was golden. It was worth traveling three thousand miles just for this. Should I end the story here, on the high note? Or be brutally honest, and tell you what happened next? Fucking hell. The shit storm continued. Hours later, my flu and an empty stomach and the free vodka caught up with me. I called my friends and left drunken messages. After going to the restroom I got lost in the Machine, couldn't find the back room where the cast had been hanging out, and called Gro to tell her I was going home. Outside on the sidewalk, it was late. I undid the u-lock, put on my messenger bag, and headed home on Tara's bike. I made it home to Allston on autopilot, having biked the streets a thousand times. But the next day, waking up, I couldn't remember the trip home. Was there traffic? Which way did I go? I don't know. I don't remember. I've never biked that drunk before, and I don't want to, ever again. Fin.

Saturday, April 22

Still alive. Another day of feeling like hell, even worse than the day before—sick, hung over, even less sleep, coughing. I felt like a living corpse, reanimated for the sole purpose of drinking coffee and packing boxes. Hank did me a huge favor and picked me up in the morning with his work truck, along with the pile of boxes I was taking to the post office, catching the cheap Media Mail Rate before I left town.

I arrived at the Allston post office, a tiny office from the '50s, with a huge concrete sorting room in back, right out of the bland off-white florescent hell of Bukowski's *Post Office*. The clerk barraged me with a constant stream of Bostonian humor that I can't even replicate, as Hank and I made several trips to the van and made a huge pile of boxes on the counter. I could hardly speak, much less write my name, but managed to send off my most precious belongings—everything I've ever written, videotaped and published. My television shows, journals since I was ten years old, and the magazines and newspapers my stories were published in, all taped up in cardboard boxes and thrown into the US mail. After much internal debate about the necessity, bother, and cost of owning things, I also decided to keep my entire stack of old *Maximumrocknrolls*. I've been a punk and reading *MRR* since about 1990, when I met Josh Reynolds who gave me my first copy in high school. While I don't have *all* of the issues since then, I have enough to make an average Ikea bookcase cry. Fucking punk. Another heavy box to add to the pile. There were also two boxes of anarchist and feminist books, pamphlets, and fanzines I've collected that I decided were absolutely necessary to quote, keep me inspired, and continue to learn from. Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, bell hooks, *The Feminist Papers, The Anarcha-Feminist Reader, All Our Relations* by Wynona LaDuke, an original copy of *Sisterhood is Powerful.* And one box of random subjects. *Soy Not Oi!, Pogo Café Recipes, A Tale of Two Cities,* Patrick Califia's *Macho Sluts, The Complete Works of Langston Hughes,* and my favorite Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five.* And still, I had lots of books left to give away.

I walked home from the post office, feeling much lighter with most of the packing done. How fitting, with all these books on my mind, to head over to the New England Anarchist Book Fair. I arrived in time to get a quick look at the tables and hear the closing keynote address by Frank Fernandez, author of *Cuban Anarchism: The History of a Movement.* The organizers seemed to be happy with the turnout, and the large main room at Mass Art was buzzing with people and tables. I had the feeling it was mostly anarchists who attended, but within this umbrella there were young people looking punk, crusties, old men with beards—lots of people I know, many others I had never seen before, and contingents from Canada, Baltimore, and throughout New England. Besides speakers, there were several workshops throughout the day as well. Although I was feeling sicker by the minute, being held up by my old wool coat, it was so good to see so many great people I hadn't seen in months. The book fair ended, I left promising to meet up at the Black Flag Tavern later, and I biked home in the rain. I didn't want to drink anymore, but I still wanted to hang out; my time in Boston almost over.

Sunday, April 23

Sitting in Gro's room, I sent a quick email to my favorite German, six hours into the future and thousands of miles away:

"Dear Stivie, The cafe turned out to be very fun, and I was drinking water most of the time...and they even had chocolate vegan cake. Yum!

"I think it was the best 'Black Flag Tavern' I've been to: an anarchist homemade bar set up in someone's basement, Christmas lights hanging on the low ceiling, the bar selling homebrew and beers for cheap. Everyone friends and a few people from out of town for the book fair; everyone dancing to a weird mix of '80s, protest gypsy-folk tunes, rock 'n' roll classics and whatever else was playing; the crowd yelling at the bar when they didn't like the song and being totally silly. I danced with Mari and Gro and Candice until I couldn't stand anymore, and it was the perfect way to end my visit.

"Another long day of packing today. I found about one million punk rock badges in my room, hidden in everything. Currency from everywhere stashed in small boxes… a huge pile of coins from all my travels in Europe, Central America and Mexico. Also lots of patches, even some cool ones from some cute crusty ;)"

Monday, April 24

Gro opened my door, making sure I was awake to catch my plane. She looked surprised and said, "Your room is so barren." My posters were down and my things were moved out. It was a strange feeling. I had to keep telling myself, "This is not your room anymore."

I hugged her goodbye, and soon I was at Logan with my backpack on, holding a small cardboard box with the one plant I couldn't leave behind, checking in my guitar case and a blue trunk with a Profits skull on the top. An entire week had passed in a blur, and I looked out over the tarmac, glad to rest in the vinyl chair. Every morning I woke up with a sudden jolt, thinking of the day and the errands to do, and every night I closed my eyes, weary, usually after 4 a.m. on the brink of morning. By the end of my trip I was laughing at myself—a Boston weeklong bender, trying to see my friends as much as possible while I was in town while packing and moving everyday. By the second day I was sick, by the third day I was totally destroyed. I came to Boston from my peaceful enclave, drinking herbal tea, eating sprouted wheat bagels and avoiding the bars, and was completely done in by my friends and myself. But by the end I had quit smoking, and finished what I had come to do. Besides feeling so sick all the time, I had an amazing trip.

My plant and I left Boston, went through connections in Washington, DC and Charlotte, NC, and finally, finally, finally—about fifteen hours later—Meredith picked me up at midnight in San Francisco.

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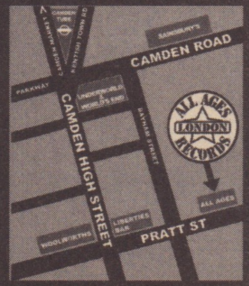

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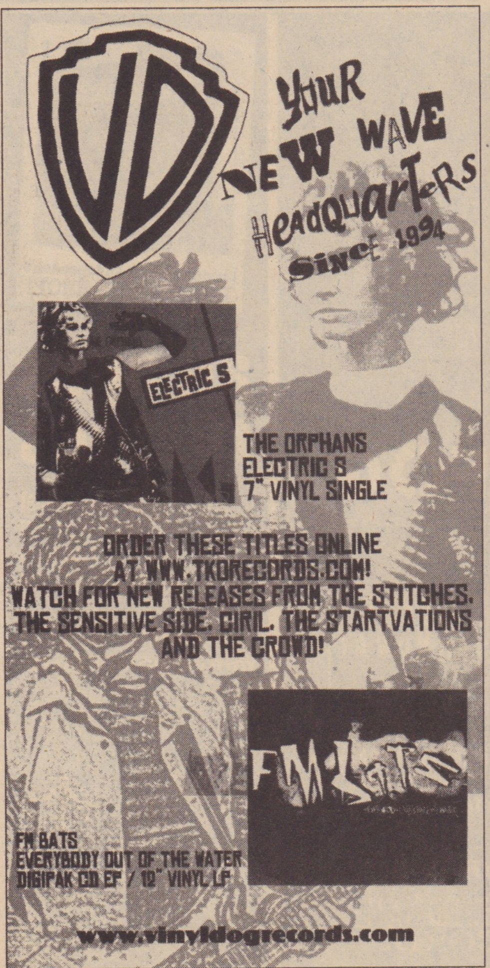
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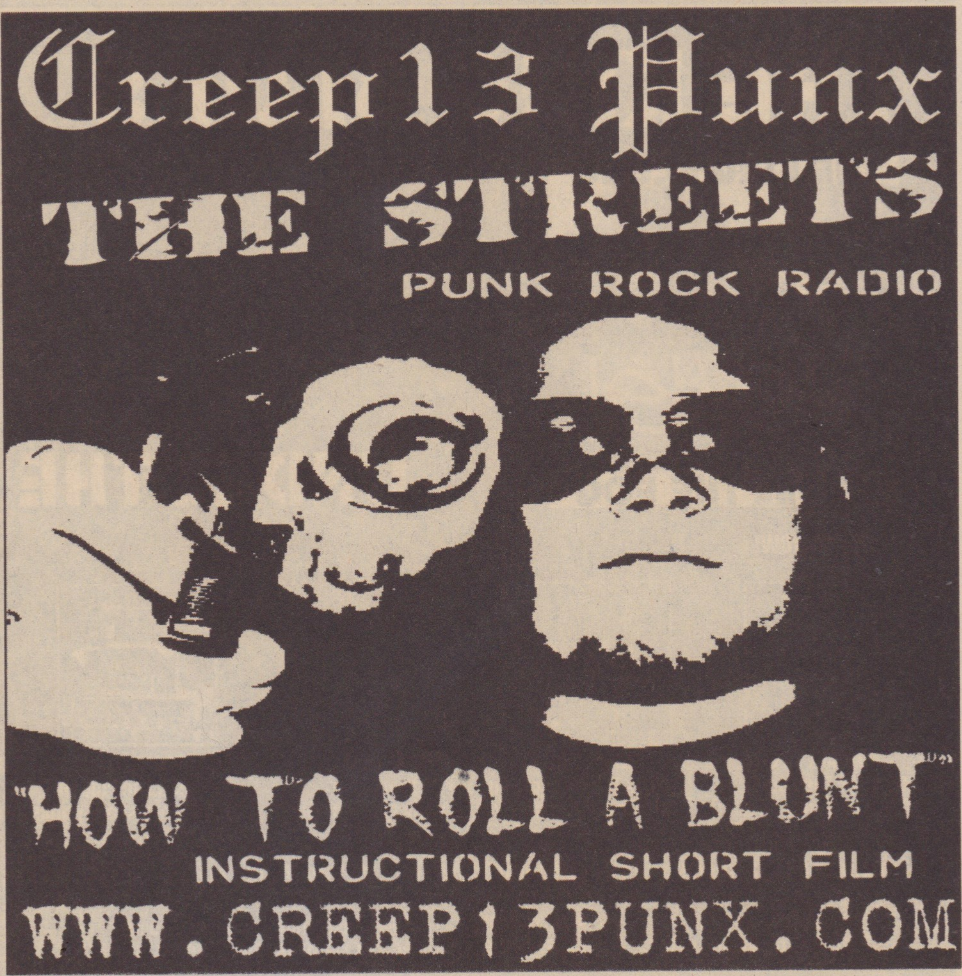
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Thursday, May 4

Today I biked through Golden Gate Park and found a nice open space near the Rose Garden. I laid down on the grass and clover, my bike at my side, and looked out into the blue of the atmosphere. Low white clouds passed overhead, and I could see the crescent moon. I could finally breathe again. Time settled into the sound of wind through tall trees. The sun was on my face, seagulls on the breeze, and I relaxed, glad to be alive.

End Notes

Through all these random days, I'm still not smoking—so a big, hearty "Fuck You" to the Marlboro Man. I win.

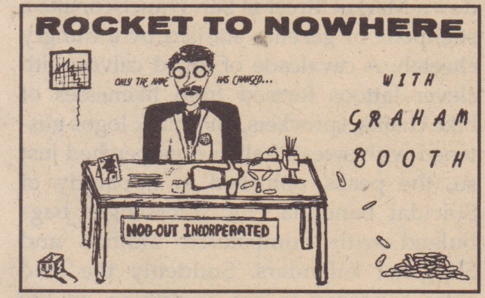
Cheers to the Boston crew!

PS Good luck to the Cuntry Club House, putting on DIY punk shows in Boston. It is one of the most positive projects I've heard about in awhile: Nine women live in the house, and every show must have at least one woman on stage. This unique rule has caused some local controversy, but as the amazing and lovely Jen Millis explained to me, the rule has forced bands and show organizers to recognize that bands and shows are still dominated by men and to talk about the issue. Also, as she rightly said, it is their house, and they can set up shows however they see fit!

PPS This is the longest Ransom Notes ever and still there is so much I left out this month. Cheers to Brian, James and Sara who I wished I could have seen more of, Ramsey, Kate, and Folk This! for a fun Mayday, the AK crew, and the Golden Gate Bridge.

And, as always, fuck the patriarchy.

Love, Erika Ransom



Bleak outlook...I don't know what England's Unwanted were gobbing about on their scorching Raw Records debut EP way back in '77, but I will hazard a guess that they weren't prophesying about the difficulty of obtaining said EP in the year 2006. For the uninitiated, UK-based Overground Records reissued the EP in full a few years ago, and there's a posthumous retrospective LP from 1985 on DeLorean that seems to be making the rounds lately called *Secret Past,* so the tunes should be gettable and at least the EP is well worth a listen. Thankfully I already have a copy (I must...I am writing about it after all!). (If my glowing review didn't do it for you, consider the fact that two members went on to form Psychedelic Furs.)

That said, I just perused my "Most Wanted" list, and the word "bleak" would be a glowing assessment of my current record outlook. There are roughly 40 records there, and a little more than half of them are from the US. Admittedly, several of the US records aren't exactly punk rock essentials, but all of them are more than enough to keep me up at night. To buy them (if only there was another way!), I'd estimate the fair market value at (gulp) roughly (gasp) $30,000. That's on a good day without a few of the more notorious, er, "investors" weighing in... Heck, I just watched one of them shell out over $2000 for one of them! And that's not even including the ten or so singles in the coveted "probably never" category—anyone got an extra Berlin Brats?

Sorry to get all "Antiques Road Show" on y'all, but this is getting ridiculous. One of the biggest spenders out there at the moment appears to be a rare records investor/broker. About 18 months ago an aged rock 'n' roll collector started acquiring rare and expensive punk records alongside rare Beatles and Elvis Presley records, at the rate of about $5000 a month. No one is sure where this guy came from, nor why he decided to start collecting punk records, but he did, and we're all paying a price (literally!) for it. The guy obviously has no clue. He was just as happy to drop $500 on an early AFI single or White Stripes single as he was to drop $500 on a Hammer Damage single. If it was "rare" and "punk" he needed it. We are convinced the guy has never dropped a needle on any of the records. We don't even know if he's ever actually heard punk rock! Chances are, he wouldn't like it if he did.

18 months later, and this guy is literally culling his early rock 'n' roll records to sell in order to focus more heavily on punk rock. Apparently early rock n roll has peaked. Esquerita anyone? I suppose this schlub thinks that early punk rock prices are still on the rise. For all of your sakes, I hope he's wrong.

Of course money and competition suck, but at least those are usually variables I can contend with. If only it was that easy! The hardest part is actually finding the damn records. Most records are pretty easily gettable, especially if you've got the money. Even on a tight budget, you can still get most records with persistence. Things start to change after ten years of collecting. I already have or have had most records I want at this point, especially from the US—many of them several times. But it's that handful of elusive records I've never owned that, ten years on, are all the more tantalizing. Most of them I can remember exactly how many times they've been offered publicly, who had them, and how much they cost. Several of them have only turned up once or twice in ten years. *Ten years!* Often times the "copies" that appear over the years are actually just one "copy" changing hands several times for ever-increasing amounts of money.

So for those 40-50 records I "need to own," I'm basically waiting in a line, standing three, four, maybe five people back, all of who have much deeper pockets *and* hermetically sealed record vaults. Let's do the math... A record turned up once in the last ten years and I'm standing five people back: I guess I'll be waiting another 50 years. About all I've got going for me at the moment is the thought that maybe, given another ten years of waiting in line, a couple of those up front will give up and leave, and no additional investment bankers decide to cut in front of me. Or I could just win the lottery. I advise all of you to take a number and get in line. "Bleak" indeed...

It's not even 10 AM and I've changed six shitty diapers already. OK, she's still a newborn, so it's not fair to call her stuff shit yet. It's just poop until it starts to change to be a bit like ours is, stink and all, at around six months when the mashed banana and avocado mixtures enter the picture. For now, it's just* neon mustard sticky baby poop. But still, rinsing out six diaper loads of it in less than two hours gets a bit tedious.

A bit tedious, yes, but not enough to get me to switch to disposable dipes or to start complaining about the full time mama gig that's hell on trying to get anything else done.

Truth is, I've never felt happier. I keep thinking my hormones are playing tricks on

me. Like, instead of getting what's commonly referred to as the baby blues or post-partum depression, a biological-hormonal out of whack nightmare, I got the opposite—some dose of manic happiness.

I have had a few teary eyed episodes since her birth, but not because I'm depressed. The tears fell due to heartbreak. I'm glad two of my knowledgeable mama friends warned me beforehand that it would happen. They told me my heart would break over the loss of my six-year only child relationship and sure enough, it did.

It's rather bizarre to explain. When I was still pregnant with this second baby, I seriously wondered how in the hell it would be possible to love another child like I love my first. I really worried about it. My cousin, who already had two kids, assured me I would be able to, but I really didn't know how it would be possible.

And then on the third day of her life, it happened. It hit me so hard I just started crying. It felt like my heart was ripped open and stuffed fuller than it had ever been before and was left even more emotionally raw and exposed than it had been left after I fell in love with my first. Just like that, I was bawling, mourning the changed relation with my first while celebrating the new.

I told you it was bizarre.

Equally bizarre to me is the sense of calm satisfaction that's come with having a second child. Maybe it's that I know what I'm doing this second time around. I'm not scrambling for the nonexistent instruction manual like I did with my first. I'm confident this time whereas last time I wasn't, even though I thought I was.

Last time, I would try every trick in the book for calming a fussy baby and would get flustered easily when nothing seemed to work. This time, I've not only mastered those tricks but have also learned how to really read the baby's cues. Therefore, I've been able to care for her needs effectively before she even hits the fussy mark. And I cannot tell you how amazingly empowering that is for me as a mother. After all these years, I feel I finally got the hang of it.

So yeah, I'm pretty happy with my finely honed confidence and not feeling too overwhelmed. But I wonder how long these feelings will last. I can't help but remember how I just couldn't play the role of 24-7 mama anymore when my first was about six months old; I needed something else back in my life.

Right now, my post-partum primate hormone brain is keeping me happy with being mama and with all the domesticity that comes with it. I might feel like Einstein bliss in the mama world, but I must admit I'm pretty mushy when it comes to anything else right now.

I asked my midwife why I feel so weird, like why I don't have any desire to do anything but be mama right now. I forget exactly what she said, because I've got mama mush brain, but it was along the lines of some self-preservation-survival-maternal instinct and that I should just go with it because it won't last forever and that there's a reason why I feel this way and that is to help me give my baby a well-attended-to and healthy start.

That's cool because although I'm irrationally post-partumly happy and have really been enjoying taking care of my new baby, I have to admit to some pangs of feeling painfully and irrevocably out of the loop when it comes to anything happening outside of my little cozy family land bubble—which, of course, is pretty much everything!

I've been meaning to order some new records to help me feel not so out of it. You know, since I'm not going out to shows right now, I figure I'll bring the show tunes in. As I see it, it's a perfect excuse to get some records I've been wanting for a while. (And since I spend nothing on formula or disposable diapers because I breastfeed and use cloth dipes, I can rationalize spending a few bucks even though I haven't worked in four or five months; how's that for creative financing???)

The one CD that came surprise-style in the mail the other day that *really* helped me feel still not so disconnected was the new live Citizen Fish CD, as they were kind enough to include some songs from two of the tours I had played with them—while pregnant, yeah! It's pretty sweet when my six-year-old says, "Hey cool, that's you playin', mama!"

Plus it's a nice reminder that I've done this before, so I'll be able to do it all again—not only to reclaim parts of my life that get put on hold, but to have a chance to reinvent myself, this time as a mother of two, any way I want to.

If that process happens this time anything like it did last time, it'll happen gradually as the baby turns from baby to toddler and from toddler to pre-schooler and so on. The more independent they get, the more independence I get back.

And then of course there I'll be, sad and sappy in a cliché way, that my babies are all grown up and wondering in my middle-aged stupor where the time went.

So yeah, for now, I'm pretty OK with living in the land of mama mush brain for a while longer…

Punkparents, get in touch, especially if you're in Seattle or can point me in the right direction once I get there. Moving in September!!!

P.O. Box 220331 / Hollywood, FL 33022
Or yardwideyarns@hotmail.com

** Daddy 'Nesto was carrying the baby around, totally nudie because she really likes it that way. To make our big girl laugh, he held the baby above her head while she was sitting on the floor counting the pennies that the St. Patrick's Day leprechaun had brought her. He said, "Hey Emma, how long do you think I can hold Maya here before she pees on you?" Before Emma could even finish squealing, "She better not pee on me!!!," down came the rain of neon yellow sticky mustard baby poop all over the poor girl's head. Needless to say, she was pretty upset and bawled her eyes out for a while, but after I helped get her cleaned up and her shirt washed, she was OK. She laughs about it now, of course, and it's become one of her favorite stories to tell people.*

A parade of expensive-looking single-speed track racing bicycles zipped past me down Market Street in San Francisco, like a stampede of gazelles startled by a hungry cheetah. A cavalcade of toned calves with clever tattoos formed from likenesses of bike chains, sprockets, and punk logos glistened with sweat. Italian caps perched just so, the peaks upturned in a parody of Suicidal bandana chic. Messenger bags bulged with dumpstered muffins and Slingshot calendars. Suddenly the lead rider appeared to see something on the ground below—some sort of clue, perhaps? Too late. As he craned to read the word on the street he failed to spot the tram track just ahead—the sworn enemy of San Francisco bike rider and skateboarder alike. Too late to see what was coming—even if he had, this bike has no brakes—his front wheel jammed into the slot in the street and buckled. His near-weightless aluminum frame crumpled like a Pabst Blue Ribbon can. One by one he took the others with

him. By the time the emergency services made the scene it was too late. It was a gory sight and many still weep small, wet tears at the thought of the hundred-bike-punk pile up of '06. That night This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb played a free memorial show. Thousands of bearded, underfed country-politan punks from college towns across the USA made the pilgrimage to pay their respects. A pyre of discarded eighties Alva skate decks with Life's Halt stickers burned long into the summer evening.

***

Did you know there's a holiday in the US called National Boss Day? I just found out about it myself. I'm reading all about it on Hallmark's website. Curiously, I've never seen anyone give his or her supervisor, manager, or CEO a card on Boss's day. I wonder why it doesn't seem to be catching on?

People like to talk about the evils of faceless corporations and the way they're taking over America and making life impossible for the small local businesses. I am not going to argue that Wal-Mart (for example) is not utterly evil, but I have to say that one of my better working experiences has been within a large-ish corporation. I was paid better than I ever have been before or since, I received full health benefits and paid time off, and I was treated like a responsible adult—no time clocks to punch—as long as my job was done well and within a reasonable timeframe, no one really cared what time I came or went. Of course, this freedom was ripe for abuse but apparently if you treat people like adults they are apt to behave in kind. I'm not saying I didn't leave early here and there but over the course of the four and a half years I had that job I think I probably ended up putting in slightly more time than was expected, not less. Of course it wasn't perfect (I quit didn't I?) but I'm only mentioning it to compare it with some of my other job-related experiences, almost all of which have been working for small businesses, with bosses that consider themselves to be "cool" or right-on or "one of us." This type of boss likes to stress how little money they're making and how badly the business is doing as a smokescreen for paying you shit money and giving you the bare minimum of benefits and time off (if any at all).

I used to try to spend as much time unemployed as possible, simply because I feel I have better things to do with my time than selling my labor for buttons so that someone else can get rich. Don't mistake that statement as a sign of laziness or a lack of a work ethic—when I do have a job I take it seriously and work hard. I find it pointless to half-ass things especially when it's my co-workers who will have to take up the slack. Every job I've had in at least the past ten years has told me I'd be welcome back when I quit. Anyway, once I left school and fell out of further education after two years with nothing to show for it, I settled in to life on the dole. Unfortunately they were starting to crack down on that kind of behavior and soon I was dispatched to various youth training schemes under the threat of my dole being cut off if I failed to attend. Luckily one evening a friend of mine who worked at the local recording & rehearsal studio/music venue/vegetarian café told me they were going to take on a Youth Employment trainee, and would I be interested? I immediately dropped out of the "start your own business" trainee scheme I'd been on (at the end of the scheme you got a thousand pound loan to start your own business. I think the guys from Sedition did this to put out their first 7", *Dealing With Clichés - Or Dealing With Death?* and never paid back the loan, claiming the business failed. Brilliant!) and started working at the studio. The deal was they were getting paid by the government to teach me a skill (recording) and I was getting an extra tenner a week in my dole check. The important thing to note is that the right-on groovy business wasn't paying a penny out of its own pocket for me to be there.

Week in and week out I showed up, booked bands in and out of rehearsal and recording sessions, hoovered practice rooms, and soldered guitar leads. Despite regularly asking to sit in on recording sessions just to watch and try to learn something, I didn't see the inside of the recording studio until my band recorded there. I guess I made too many disapproving noises about soldering leads all day, because eventually my friend who "hired" me (not any of the three vegan, "anarchist-sympathizing" owners) took me to one side and told me they were letting me go. The reason? Apparently I wasn't keen enough. Ironically, the studio/bar was destroyed by water damage when one of the units upstairs caught fire. Despite how it might come across in this column, I was heartbroken at the loss of what was still the epicenter of my life in Glasgow even though I no longer worked there.

I only use that as one example of how small-business bosses aren't necessarily better than the corporate variety. Given the exploitative nature of almost any boss/employee relationship, I have to think that if you actually want to be a boss, you must be kind of a dick. Why would you want to be a boss, and why do we need bosses? Or do we just think we do? How did we get to this point, where we volunteer to be told what to do? OK, there's a certain amount of coercion and force involved—for most of us, individually, it's a case of get a job or starve, or get a job or live on the street. But how did we ever let society get set up this way, for the work of the many to benefit the few?

Of course, it's been proven that we don't really need bosses. There must be thousands of worker-owned cooperatives and collective businesses currently running worldwide, some of them for many years, and their numbers are growing. Here in the Bay Area one can buy everything from pizza to organic vegetables to vibrators from companies that operate without bosses. Co-op workers have no bosses but at the same time they are all bosses, and as such they have a lot of extra responsibilities. As it turns out, they are up to the job. Are you?

***

OK, so I've never actually worked in a co-op, and the experience I've had with collectives hasn't been stellar. I know it takes a lot of work and commitment to do it and I'm not sure I can get along with other people enough to make it work for me. But it's a nice idea, no? I'm sure the many MRR shitworkers who work at some of the local co-ops could chime in with more informed opinions. For more information on worker-owned cooperatives you could start at the US Federation Of Worker Co-Operatives, www.usworker.coop.

As for the first paragraph of this column, who knows? Blame it on the caffeine.

Pimp my ride: PO Box 22971, Oakland, CA 94609 / allan@dropout.cc

RALL DEAL

"I have fulfilled my destiny," the president says manically. He has just entered the nuclear launch codes that will trigger World War III. Seconds later, he emerges from a bunker. The Secretary of State squeezes between two soldiers. "Mr. President!" he shouts. "We have a diplomatic solution!"

He smiles. "It's too late," he replies. "The

missiles are flying. Alleluia. Alleluia."

The above scene, from David Cronenberg's 1983 adaptation of the horror novel *The Dead Zone*, is a classic if slightly preposterous nightmare of a world destroyed by a demented demagogue. Now, incredibly, a lunatic out of a Stephen King movie has brought the United States to the brink of Armageddon.

Until I read Seymour Hersh's exposé in *The New Yorker* and subsequent follow-up coverage by other journalists about the Bush Administration's plans to start a war against Iran, I had dismissed talk of George W. Bush's messianism as so much Beltway chatter. True, he hears voices, even claiming that God and Jesus Christ talk to him. "I believe God wants me to run for President," he told a friend in Texas. Eschewing mainstream religion, he routinely parrots the apocalyptic ravings of fringe Christianist cults: "And the light [America] has shone in the darkness [the enemies of America], and the darkness will not overcome it [America shall conquer its enemies]," he said during his fevered campaign for war against Iraq. He mimics Old Testament cadences: "God told me to strike at Al Qaeda and I struck them," Bush told the Palestinian prime minister in 2003, "and then he instructed me to strike at Saddam, which I did, and now I am determined to solve the problem in the Middle East."

Nooor-mal.

Despite the man's wacky religiosity, I have been giving Bush the benefit of a small amount of remaining doubt after five years of the most disastrous rule this nation has ever suffered. I believed that he was breathtakingly bigoted, stupid, and ignorant. But I didn't think he was out of his mind. Until now.

"Current and former American military and intelligence officials" tell Hersh "that President Bush is determined to deny the Iranian regime the opportunity to begin a pilot program, planned for this spring, to enrich uranium." Of course, uranium enrichment for peaceful atomic energy is permitted by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to which Iran is a signatory. Which is what the Iranians say they're doing. But the Bush Administration, which knows a little about lying, doesn't believe them.

Fair enough: One only has to consider the risk of nuclear conflagration between India and Pakistan to see why the fewer countries have nukes, the better. Not every country can be trusted with such terrifying weapons. So how does the trustworthy United States plan to make its stand against nuclear proliferation?

By nuking Iran.

"One of the military's initial option plans," reports Hersh, "...calls for the use of a bunker-buster tactical nuclear weapon, such as the B61-11, against underground nuclear sites." An intelligence insider says that "Every other option, in the view of the nuclear weaponeers, would leave a gap. 'Decisive' is the key word of the Air Force's planning. It's a tough decision. But we made it in Japan."

"We're talking about mushroom clouds, radiation, mass casualties, and contamination over years," he went on. Crazy stuff. But whenever someone inside the Administration opposes the nuclear option, "They're shouted down." The pro-nuke faction, led by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, is responding to internal critics with a "B61 [nuclear bomb] with more blast and less radiation."

You may have heard that Bush dismissed Hersh's article as "wild speculation." At first I, like you, responded with a sigh of relief. But I've come to learn that Bush doesn't talk like a human being. His policy pronouncements are carefully lawyered to give him the kind of technical out that Bill Clinton could only have dreamed of. Bushspeak is crafted to ensure that what Mr. Straightshooter says is rarely what he means. Filtering "wild speculation" statement through Bushspeak analysis shows that it's no denial at all.

"The doctrine of prevention is to work together to prevent the Iranians from having a nuclear weapon," Bush said. Notice that, despite the disaster in Iraq, he still reserves the right to wage preemptive war. He continued: "I know here in Washington prevention means force. It doesn't mean force necessarily. In this case it means diplomacy."

It doesn't mean force *necessarily*. If and when a reporter reminds Bush of this statement after he attacks Iran, he will say that he never took the military option—including nukes—off the table. Moreover, he'll say, that he told the truth at the time. Thus the present tense: *means*.

Bush has *not* denied Hersh's article. Therefore, we should accept it as accurate.

We already know that Bush is capable of lying about his willingness to use diplomacy instead of war. "We're still in the final stages of diplomacy," he told reporters on March 6, 2003. "I'm spending a lot of time on the phone, talking to fellow leaders about the need for the United Nations Security Council to state the facts, which is Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed...Iraq is a part of the war on terror. Iraq is a country that has got terrorist ties."

Actually, Bush had decided to invade Iraq months—probably years—before. He had moved hundreds of thousands of American troops into the Persian Gulf. Two weeks later, he ordered an assassination attempt on Saddam Hussein and began the saturation bombing of Baghdad. But Bush was still talking as if there were something Saddam could do to avoid war. "Our demands are that Saddam Hussein disarm," he went on. "We hope he does." Sure.

Many people have asked me during the last year whether I thought Bush would attack Iran. I said no, because he's out of troops, out of cash and out of political capital. He couldn't so he wouldn't.

Those things are still true. Not to mention that Iran would make Iraq look like a cakewalk. Yet, as Hersh reports, the U.S. may bomb at least 400 cities and towns inside Iran. "Air Force planning groups are drawing up lists of targets, and teams of American combat troops have been ordered into Iran, under cover, to collect targeting data and to establish contact with anti-government ethnic-minority groups." You don't need troops, money or the support of the American people when God talks to you. And when you're insane.

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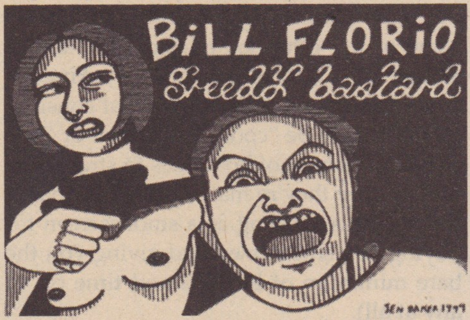
NEW BOOK: *Attitude 3: The New Subversive Online Cartoonists* (NBM Publishing, 128 pp., price $13.95), is out now! You can get the book at any bookstore or comics shop, or on the internet. It includes cartoons by and interviews with 21 amazing web-cartoonists, some political and others just hilarious. *Attitude 3* is a great primer on the sometimes-perplexing world of web-cartoons and shows an amazing range of artistic creativity.



I just finished a book by Pete Earley called *Crazy*, which is about schizophrenia in America, and I also read another book about the influenza pandemic of 1918. After reading them both the same week, I got me thinking about the fragility of life and more importantly the fragility of sani-

ty.

In my adolescence and early twenties, I definitely went through a lot of stress, bouts with depression, low self-esteem, massive amounts of betrayal, and some pretty poor eating habits. Of course this is probably pretty typical of many people, and you have to wonder why some people crack and get mentally ill and some don't. I've found it's very similar to how some people die from getting the flu and some people take a couple days off work and shit their brains out.

This also adds to my theory that many people can go mentally ill from eating Cuban sandwiches. I blame that orange stuff they smear on them...Oh wait, lemme get back to what I was talking about.

The first thing that came to mind was that while I had a lot of shit to deal with, I wasn't drinking or drugging my problems away. You see, some people tend to think that doing a lot of drugs can lead to mental illness. This has pretty much been proven untrue, though I have seen a couple of people have acid flashbacks, which is not fun. The reason that people assume that drugs cause insanity is because the type of person who is more likely to develop a drug habit is the same type of person who is likely to go insane. Many of the severely mentally ill have both problems, but you don't get crazy from crack, you're crazy enough to smoke it in the first place.

But that got me thinking a little deeper into it. I mean, if you start at an early age immediately trying to drown your problems out with drugs and booze, basically letting your mind drift away into some other reality, maybe your mind just decides to go on and do that for you on its own after a while. It's like if you live in a hermetically sealed bubble all your life and then talk a walk through a nursery school, you're bound to catch some illnesses. Also, all people have a breaking point at which they will go insane. If you take a look at those who have suffered post traumatic stress disorder (shell shock) you need not look any further than the Viet Nam vets who share the streets with other mentally ill homeless people. James Bond has that cyanide capsule because no matter how tough, everyone talks if the interrogation is allowed to go on long enough. It's sort of like how all people lose their hair, some when their 20 and some when their 90.

The most fucked up thing I learned is that you can actually become mentally ill from getting the flu. Encephalitis Lethargica is the illness portrayed in the film *Awakenings*. Now, I don't know if you remember your high school American history, but the greatest fuckup by an American president in the 20th century was Woodrow Wilson's failure to argue against French efforts to punish the Germans for the First World War. For pretty much the whole war, Wilson was prepared for making sure a world war would never happen again and making sure the new democratic Germany would be a part of The League of Nations that he conceptualized. The problem was, he got the flu when he got to the peace conference. Many history books attribute his strange behavior after this illness from a mild stroke, but many others attribute it to Encephalitis Lethargica. Basically, he lost all his ability as an able politician; he suddenly sided with the French and wanted to punish the former Emperor. It's very probable that Hitler's rise to power would have never happened if Wilson had kept his marbles.

Then you have someone like my boss. My boss is a very tough woman in her early '50s. Just about everyone she deals with on a daily basis is at some level of insanity. This has gone on for most of her life. She grew up in a housing project, her dad was a city cop, her husband has been diagnosed bi-polar and likes to steal thousands of dollars from her and her business while sometimes claiming to be a professional wrestler. We do wedding photography, so I don't have to tell you the sort of abuse she gets from customers. Her son is deaf and seems to always be in trouble with the law. But, she always is able to cope. I find it rare to see her depressed or withdrawing. She always takes all this shit head on, and keeps an attitude about it; I wouldn't call it a positive attitude, but maybe you can call it survival. I mean, I think I cope pretty well from day to day, but really, if we were to switch places, I'd probably be taking out a lot of people with some large automatic weapon.

So my point in bringing up all this random crapola is to say that there's that cliché that whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger. I mean, that's a generalization that can also be taken too far. One hundred-something years ago, doctors liked to stick leeches on sick people and wipe them down with battery acid. I think you should just be aware that you can make yourself very sick for the rest of your life by hiding from your problems. Then, when you really get stressed out, you can snap. Mental breakdowns, major depressions, hallucinations, and dementia are things you should keep in mind just as much as smoking giving you cancer, seat belts keeping your head out of windshields, and stink bombs forcing you to sign your life away to the music industry.

People age 14 to 25 seem to be the most in jeopardy of breaking their minds, so be careful about spreading yourself thin. I mean, unless it really is a matter of life and death, taking an extra semester to finish school, or taking a couple days off of work is really not gonna be the end of the world. Of course, this is where I should mention that taking yourself too seriously is going to add to your anguish, especially if someone like me catches on to it.

I also want to mention, a lot of the folks around you probably happen to have some pretty serious mental problems. While I wouldn't want to add to the stigmas involved, these folks really need to be medically treated. Unfortunately, serious chemical imbalances can only be treated with serious chemicals. Sure, I know some folks who get one up on their medium level depression with diet and exercise, but someone who hears voices or thinks people are conspiring against them, they need to take medication. I mean, sure, it's nice that they're doing that anarcho zine, but maybe they're actually nuts and could use a little more help than having them scoop shit out for Food Not Bombs. For some of them, this is a very big life-long struggle, and I definitely sympathize with their problem. The bright side of this is that a lot of those same people are also some of the most interesting and creative of any of us. And hey, as long as they don't poop on my rug, it's all good to me.

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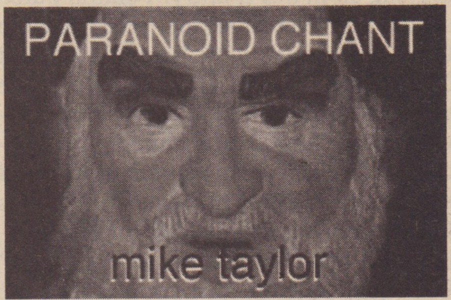


Well punks, for all the sound and fury that constitutes our bread and butter, the time is obviously nigh. It's just in the air…can you feel it? It's almost summer, the air is alive, the ground is opening, and people are in the streets. So here's our to-do list:

Learn Spanish. That's right. Because we should know it already.

Stop romanticizing dumb punk lyrics about the summer, i.e. anything by Gorilla Biscuits. There's plenty of substantive material in

the canon without being fooled by a catchy chord progression and vocals that *sound* like they're meant. Gorilla Biscuits was fucking *dumb*, and not in the good way.

Enter the world. Who would've thought that the next big social upheaval would happen *in society*!?![1]

Well, everybody. Duh. *Anyway*, how was the May 1st rally in *your* town, American readers? Here in Providence the paper didn't even try to estimate an attendance. I will tell you this: it was big. Really big. Providence is, like many coastal towns, a "minority majority" city. The largest single ethnicity is still vanilla, but the solid majority of the metropolitan population is comprised of the combined peoples of Laos, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Liberia, Puerto Rico, Portugal, Guatemala, and on and on. *The Global other*, si? And the general strike rendered south Providence a ghost town. The papers played ninny, said that the economic effects of the day without workers were minimal. But the crowd in the streets was real. And it was everywhere. All over the country, organized through churches and community groups and family advocacy[2], the most solid, visible movement made its presence undeniably felt. And standing on the hill on the lawn of the Statehouse, where the march coalesced into a rally, watching people flow in like the tide for over an hour, watching the massive demonstration in the name of the *real* American dream, watching more U.S. flags waving than at a skinhead rally, I thought to myself: *this is the Republican party.*

What kind of surprise Philip K. Dick shit is going on in this country? Political punxes, did you ever think that you'd have to learn to organize with Republicans? But here we are: on May 1st the call was made to stand up against the racist and overwhelmingly hypocritical immigration policies of the Bush administration, to stand behind the Latino movement that was Bush's very fucking ladder rung to election! But what are you gonna do, *say no?* We're gonna march in the streets with the very same people who are largely pro-life, homophobic, and I'm not sure, but I think they eat meat. I mean, I was totally waiting for the anti-religious veggie rainbow revolution, but this other one is here, and it stands for some pretty good stuff…

It seems like it's the most basic stuff that gets people going. It doesn't take a lot of college reading, or even movies, to be into the idea of feeding your family. U.S. racism exacts a toll on the Global South equivalent to a slow asphyxiation, so it's no surprise when people come up for air. And there really is *so* much work to do, maintaining a bloated empire. Coming from a religious culture, they tend to sympathize with the way the Right has commandeered Christ as their spokesman. U.S. culture has tended to equate progressivism with a secular worldview (which we, as the punks, are the logical inheritors), to which we unflaggingly adhere. So even as the racist side of the conservative movement rears its head (to once again, win the votes of white capitalists—there is no ethical matter of import within immigration policy, it's all theater), religious people have to side with their spiritual obligations on Election Day. But man, can they organize. How are social liberals and political radicals going to provide spiritually for potential allies? Or if not provide, keep their self-righteousness to themselves? It was so much easier when it was just all white kids in black masks!!!

You can write me: PO Box 28226, Providence, RI 02908. And I'm a punx over 30 now, so respect.

[1] *Not* at a punk show. Sorry.

[2] Church, family, community groups… fuck, all the things that we've been tearing ourselves from for years and years!

Anorexia, Suicide and Dreaming

I recently read Kate Bornstein's new book, *Hello, Cruel World: 101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks, and Other Outlaws.* I read it really fast because I was interviewing Kate only two days after I received the book—or actually, the Word document, because the galleys weren't yet ready. This turned out to be okay, because I could print out the book single-spaced and in a small font, so it only came to 70-something pages instead of around 200 in the actual book. This was useful because of all my chronic pain (fibromyalgia), which makes it difficult to turn the pages of a book, believe it or not. But that's a subject for a different column; I just wanted to give you some context. More context: I'm writing this with voice activation software, which is how I've written everything for well over a year now.

But anyway, back to suicide, I mean Kate Bornstein's book, which looks really beautiful in the PDF so I will certainly be excited when I behold the finished volume—I'm a writer, so of course I have a fetish for books! Okay, I'm feeling a little nervous about the topic of suicide, so I'm just gonna start right away with the alternative that made me break down in tears and starts sobbing for longer than I can remember. It's number 81. Starve yourself. Here's what Kate says:

Starving yourself is a valid alternative to killing yourself, but only just barely. If you're starving yourself either by not eating or by throwing up what you eat—or if you're thinking about doing that—it doesn't make you a bad person, but you do need medical help. Use another alternative in this book to stay alive while you stop doing this one. This alternative is the most deadly in the book.

Did I already tell you that reading this made me break down and starts sobbing for longer than I can remember? Starting around age 12, I was anorexic—I hated my body and my desires and the world around me and I wanted to disappear, but also I wanted to take control of my body from my parents who sexually abused me. Before I read this section, I hadn't thought of this as an alternative to suicide—it's funny, as a teenager, almost all of my friends were suicidal at one time or another, and even though I was just as depressed as any of them I never really wanted to kill myself. I always wondered why. I didn't really feel much hope then.

Then reading number 81 in Kate Bornstein's book was incredibly terrifying and liberating. It made me realize that one of the things that helped me to survive was anorexia. Instead of thinking about killing myself, I could think about how many calories were in that bagel I just ate, whether the salad dressing was no-cal or lo-cal, how to hide my food in napkins and discard it when my parents weren't looking. I didn't have healthier options, and that's what's so liberating about Kate's book: it puts all the choices on the table, even the ones that might kill you but might also save your life. What an incredibly brave and honest choice for Kate to make.

When I was sobbing and feeling overwhelmed, I went back to number 2. Take a deep breath and touch yourself. That was helpful. Then I went to cruise Buena Vista Park, which was also helpful—after crying,

I felt so much more present. At the park, I fucked this guy in between trees, which was fun enough, but the best part was when he kept holding out his hand as we were walking down the hill and I was stumbling in the dark—he thought I was drunk, and he didn't want me to fall. I don't drink—that's another thing that saved my life in high school, drugs and alcohol—but I got to a point when they weren't helping any more. Actually, for a while they were making things worse. So I stopped, which was difficult. It still is, sometimes, even though it's been five years.

Anyway, I'm so glad that Kate includes sexuality as a central part of a book of alternatives to teen suicide. This has already gotten her banned from Fox Lane High School in wealthy Bedford, Connecticut, where a businessman complained, "Why would a person, who is neither man nor woman, who is obviously confused, come to speak about gender, much less teen suicide?" It's funny, because one of the things that ended up getting her banned was a link to a phone sex website—phone sex was another of the ways that I survived my teenage years, though it wasn't as important as drugs or anorexia.

In Kate Bornstein's book, she talks about things to do instead of killing yourself, rather than reasons not to, which I think is an important tactical shift. Her goal is to encourage people to create lives free from assigned identities, as much as possible, and she invokes a beautiful quote by Minnie Bruce Pratt, who says, "Our imaginations are in thrall to the institutions of oppression." I will admit that I got a little scared at the beginning of the book, when Kate invokes "the path laid out by the founders of the United States of America." She means the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," but of course I thought mostly about slavery, genocide, and imperialism. Kate also suggests, a few times, calling the cops. Of course, this might not work too well for most people of color, anyone who is undocumented, someone with a felony record, most trans-people, or anyone with a conscience. I'm certain that Kate knows all of this—I just wish she included an analysis of the criminal "justice" system in the book; this could also save lives.

One of the strengths of Kate Bornstein's work in general is her ability to talk about complicated issues in a very easily understood away, which I think disproves the academic mythology that complicated issues require complicated language. But I wonder also if there's a danger in using simplistic language to talk about complicated issues. I'm thinking of one of the dictates in the book—"don't be mean." Such a message is often used to silence people with critical perspectives. I know that's not Kate's intention, but if someone said to me as a teenager, "don't be mean," I would've wanted to kill them. Actually, I still would.

But when Kate suggests, "become a more frightening monster than the one they think you are," "frame your own debate," "go completely batty," and "throw away morals," how could I not be in love? When I put down the book, I immediately started to wonder what my life would look like if I could truly embrace and sculpt and transform my fantasies in order to mold the world into something I could live with. I'm completely serious when I say that I look forward to reading the book again—I want to breathe more, to touch myself again and again, to cry, to dream.

Mattilda, aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore is the editor, most recently, of *That's Revolting! Queer Strategies for Resisting Assimilation* (Soft Skull 2004) and the author of *Pulling Taffy* (Suspect Thoughts 2003). Mattilda lives for feedback, so send her love letters and/or delicious threats via the recently updated www.mattbernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or write to PO Box 640047 / San Francisco, CA 94164-0047.

"What was it like?" asks my friend Shari, as I tell her about my last visit to Armageddon.

"It was, well, I dunno..." I kind of mumbled.

"Did you go *there*?" she asks, "And if so, what'd you do?"

I look in her pretty brown eyes and know what's she's asking. So I tell her. I just hope she doesn't hate me.

*

So, there I was, back in hell.

The Sunshine State.

Land of old people, frat boys, and rednecks.

Floriduh. The armpit of the universe.

I wasn't happy about it. But the late 1998 or 1999 tour with Furious George had taken us there. So there I was.

I looked down at my feet. White Nikes, with yellow logos and red shoelaces. Punk Rock. Furious George style. I looked next to my feet. And saw it. Finally. The plate. Made of steel and stone. In the ground. And I read it.

"Lester Martin Tabb: 1937-1993".

My father's gravestone. I hadn't gone to his funeral years back because I didn't want to return to Florida—plus, my whole family hated me. I knew I'd come back to hell one day, and then I'd pay my respects. And today was the day.

"That's it," said Evan, my bass player, to me, in a very sober voice.

"Wow, your dad's grave," added Michael, our drummer.

"You are standing over him now," said Adam, drummer from Yum Yum Tree, and our current tour manager/merch guy.

I looked down, and indeed, I was. His headstone was about two feet from my feet, which made me, oh, about on his chest.

"What's it like?" asked Michael.

I thought for a second.

"I dunno," I said, looking at the gravestone with all the little rocks placed on it, no doubt, by my sisters and brothers and stepmother.

"Do you miss him? Do you wish he were here?" asked Evan, with his bright green hair.

I didn't answer because I didn't know what to say.

I was standing over my dead dad, and I wasn't sure how I felt. Here was the guy that caused me grief my whole life. A guy who beat me to a pulp since I was a small child. A guy who emotionally tortured me every day of my life, and a guy who sexually molested me. A guy who hated my leather jacket, who wanted me to become an accountant, who beat his second wife, and who wore more women's underwear under his business suits than Frank-N-Furter from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show.*

Here was a guy who I shot with my BB gun, a guy who hit on my girlfriends, who told my ex-wife stuff I can never repeat, who told my brothers when my mother was dying of cancer that he'd be happy when she was dead.

And a guy who pretended that he was once best friends with my cool stepdad, Nick.

Here was a guy, well, who I didn't much like.

"Well?" asked Evan, from behind his Ray-Bans, "Do you miss him? Are you

going to pay your last respects, or what?"

I thought about it. But let me back up a bit.

*

My father and I really never got along after I was five or so. He used to like me, take me for rides to Coney Island on his bicycle and stuff, but when my Mom left him, he took out his frustrations on me and my brothers. My whole life was spent defending myself from his punches, and his threats of sending me to military school. When I finally turned 17 and was kicked out of my home for good, my life changed for the better. I moved in with my real mom and my stepdad, Nick, who were totally awesome, and I learned what life was really about.

I was lucky.

Most kids don't have that choice.

Of having a good parent versus a bad one.

I was lucky I really didn't have to go out totally on my own.

*

From the time I was 18 until my dad's death, we had very little contact. He'd try to convince me to be his son every now and again, but it always ended up with him telling me how to run my life, and abusing me mentally. But somewhere deep inside of myself, I felt as though I needed some sort of relationship with him, so I kept going back for more. And every time I went back it was more abuse.

I kept sticking my hand on the stove and getting burnt.

Dumbass.

*

I saw him for the last time at my brother Sam's wedding, after my mom died. I didn't say a word to him, but he kept smirking at me. Like he was happy my mom was dead. I ignored him best I could, and tried to show my brother a good time and a happy wedding.

*

While I was recording with my former band, Iron Prostate, my father had a heart attack. An ambulance in Tallahassee came to save him, but the unit didn't have those electric shock things that make your heart start to beat again, like on *ER*, so, well, he expired. He was dead by the time they got him to the hospital. My brother called and told me. He asked that I come South of Hell to Florida to the funeral, but warned me that my family hated me. That they blamed *me* for his death.

Forced between a horrible funeral where they'd crucify me, or finishing an album that I wasn't really liking, I went with door number two.

Eventually, I knew, I would see my dad's grave.

*

Now, years later, that time had come.

We had left on tour, and were doing the whole East Coast. Somehow we ended up doing a show in Gainesville, then took a trip north.

And now I was in Tallahassee.

On the way to Panama City.

So there I was, standing over my father's grave. As I looked at his name, and the rocks my sisters put on his grave, I felt rage build up in my veins.

This man was a monster, and even though he was dead, he still haunted my dreams every night.

Still does.

To this day, I still dream he is chasing me with an ax, or that he is beating me and my brothers, or hurting my mother. And I still wake up screaming.

"So, George," said Evan, snapping me out of my thoughts, "Last respects or what? We gotta hit the road—the next show awaits!"

I looked down at the stone, then reached into my pocket and pulled out a couple of Furious George buttons. One was just the monkey and the name of the band on it, and the other had a picture of me, and read "I Love George!"

I put them on his stone next to the rocks my brothers and sisters had placed.

Michael, Adam, and Evan giggled.

"So I guess that's it?" said Evan, and turned to make his way toward the van.

"Not exactly," I said.

"You gonna say a prayer?" he asked.

I didn't answer him. Instead, I just smiled.

At him.

At Michael.

And at Adam.

Then I pulled down the front of my pants, took out my dick, and took the best piss of my life.

On that damn engraved stone.

As I did so, I thought of all the bad things my father had done, what an evil person he was, and how I was glad he was dead.

I thought about how he beat his kids, tortured them, and hated my mother, the nicest woman to ever walk on this planet. As I pissed I thought of all the pain, and how he still scared me worse than Jason, Freddy Kruger, or Donald Rumsfeld, even in death.

And I thought about me.

And all the rage I was still holding.

*

As my bladder emptied onto the words, "Lester Martin Tabb: 1937-1993" I began to feel good.

Relieved.

As my stream began to weaken, I squeezed as much out as I could. Of urine.

And of rage.

Finally, I shook twice, like my father always taught me, and pulled up my black ladies stretch pants.

"Wow," said Adam, "that's the most punk rock thing I have ever seen!"

I nodded my head.

Then Michael asked the question of the day.

"Feel better?" he asked.

"Much," I answered.

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. www.georgetabb.com
2. *Surfing Armageddon,* my new book, is now out. I have a copy! Anyway, it's got more Floriduh stories, lots of sex, and more of my mean dad. Punk Rock.
3. www.myspace.com/georgetabb. While there, find Paul Ryder and The Riots page...great local band.
4. Finally, this month I got some cool stuff. But I haven't been really well enough to listen to it...so ya gotta wait till next month!

CrimethInc. Workers' Collective Bullet-in

To learn how adversaries help to prop up authoritarian regimes, we can consult Orwell's *1984*, in which a totalitarian government relies on a state of perpetual war to maintain its control. The ideal enemy is unable to win, but always able to threaten, so subjects neither feel too safe nor too fearful. The ideal enemy is a mirror image of the government, so subjects who might find fault with their rulers are more outraged by their enemies: if the government is willing to sacrifice innocent life, the enemy must be even more callous in doing so; if the government promotes a superstitious, repressive creed, the enemy must fight in the name of an equally superstitious and repressive belief system. The ideal enemy must provide excuses to justify the repression of internal foes, but must be different enough from those foes that

there is no need to fear the two finding common cause.

For the empire of global capitalism, ethnic/religious terrorism is the perfect foil. A rival empire would pose an obstacle to global domination, but terrorists can threaten everywhere without ruling anywhere. Only cold-blooded terrorism can make the humiliations of capitalist exploitation pale in comparison; only terrorist aspirations to power can make the rule of plutocratic demagogues seem preferable.

But let's rewind a bit.

Today, an Internet search for "Mission Accomplished"—the text on the banner that hung behind Bush on Mayday, 2003, when he announced an end to major military operations in Iraq—turns up countless smug editorials from liberal and left wing pundits crowing about the bloody resistance to the subsequent occupation. Don't get them wrong, they're not enthusiasts of armed struggle—they're the first to oppose even the mildest forms of resistance here in the US—they just love to see things go wrong for their political opponents. However many civilians die in autonomous as well as state military operations, the important thing is that rival demagogues get egg on their faces, as this increases the chances of power shifting into their willing hands.

Anarchists, too, have largely interpreted the civil war in Iraq as a debacle for Bush and his cronies, sometimes to the point of endorsing it without bothering about what the insurgents are fighting for. Yes, it is healthy for every person living under others' power to resist; unfortunately, this does not mean that all who do so struggle against "power over" itself. Over the past year, the violence in Iraq has become more reminiscent of the ethnic strife of twentieth-century India than of an anti-imperialist liberation struggle. Regardless, everyone still assumes that this violence runs counter to Bush's designs for the area.

At the risk of venturing into conspiracy theory, let's take a moment to consider an alternate scenario. What if the Iraqi resistance is not unforeseen after all, but a potential outcome the Bush regime took into account—perhaps even the one they were counting on? This seems counterintuitive, as every statement they've made since the beginning of the war has given us to believe that they expected the post-Saddam opposition to be short-lived; but if we want to avoid nasty surprises we'd better allow for the possibility that our rulers aren't as obtuse and inept as they seem.

What, if anything, would the Bush administration stand to gain from replacing the iron rule of Saddam Hussein over resentful Iraqis with chaos, civil war, and resentment against the US? The costs of this exchange are obvious: it makes the US government and military look incompetent, thus decreasing the Republican Party's chances of winning the next election, and it facilitates Islamic terrorist recruiting.

But perhaps the last of these effects is not so undesirable. Bush's regime derives much of its popularity from the feeling that the country is under attack; it's hard to imagine where he'd be now if not for the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. It's not so much of a stretch to hypothesize that, consciously or not, he and his colleagues are pursuing a course of action that will reinforce their position by strengthening their enemies.

Islamic terrorist groups are certainly better situated today than they were six years ago. The September 11 attacks were the work of a small number of people, and the culmination of years of effort; now, with a nationwide insurgency to participate in and cull recruits from, not to mention a global atmosphere of anti-Muslim persecution, militant Islam is steadily gaining stature. At that time, it was difficult for such groups to attract notice outside parts of the Middle East; now, they need only carry out one major attack a year to remain the center of international attention. Back then, they had only managed to kill a few thousand people; tens of thousands have perished in the ensuing wars and inquisitions—and for terrorists, it is the net total of violence and horror that determines their power, not the way their losses and gains compare to those of their adversaries.

If further evidence were wanting, Hamas, one of the most militant parties in the Middle East, has now come to power in the Palestinian government. This is the inevitable consequence of the US government pursuing a foreign policy that gives the Palestinians no reason to trust its commitment to peace or justice. The accession of Hamas to governmental power gives the US and Israel further excuses not to work towards peace, and in turn pushes other Arab governments to take sides against them. This feedback loop of escalating conflict can only lead to more and more violence.

Some years ago, I saw a survivor of the occupation speak. She maintained that in their air strikes and assassinations, the Israelis often deliberately targeted organizers who were willing to negotiate towards a peaceful resolution rather than the ones most committed to violence, presumably in order to render diplomatic solutions impossible. If her claims are true, they correlate well with other policies of the Israeli right wing, which also seem designed to provoke terrorism by stomping out any other form of resistance to Israeli injustices.

We must consider the possibility that the long-term objective of the Bush administration is to provoke and promote Islamic fundamentalist terrorism. This would explain the otherwise senseless invasion of a crippled nation governed by a secular dictator loathed by Al Qaeda, the otherwise botched handling of the subsequent occupation, and the current wrangling with Hamas and the Iranian government: by destabilizing entire regions, driving Muslims across the world to rage and despair, and closing off all possibilities other than autonomous acts of terrorist violence, Bush and his colleagues hope to create a new adversary for the sequel to the Cold War.

The Iraq war was not about oil alone; as the warlike party, the Republicans need adversaries even more than they need world domination. Like the Israeli right wing, they benefit from conflict: they know that however much people complain between elections, as long as there's a war on, voters will fall in line behind them when it's time to cast ballots, since the opposition party lacks the credentials for wartime leadership. (Hence, it would be most convenient for the current conflict with Iran to come to a head in 2007, though this may not be possible.) By a process of natural selection, they have come to pursue policies that tend to get their supporters shot down, blown up, and kidnapped, because these unfortunate effects drive more supporters into their arms.

Mere world domination is no use to a repressive regime. As soon as there are no barbarians at the gates to point to as the greater of two evils, the subjects start getting restless—witness the decade following the fall of the Berlin Wall, when internal resistance grew and grew in the vacuum left by the Communist menace. War-without-end may make people restless, too, but it also keeps them busy reacting to it, if not dying in it, instead of cutting to the root of the matter.

Years of perpetuating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are paying off: militant Islam, once a backyard startup company, is finally a global threat, poised to replace the Communist Bloc. Western-style capitalism

has extended its influence and control so far that external opposition must now come from previously peripheral corners of the world, such as Afghanistan; a few fanatics from that periphery were enough to inaugurate the new era of Terror-vs.-Democracy back in 2001, but it will take a lot more fanatics to maintain—and the current US foreign policy will produce them. The Republican Party may lose the next election as the result of public dismay over the untidiness of the Iraq occupation, but so long as they succeed in setting a long-term worldwide conflict in motion first, they can count on returning to power soon enough.

If all this speculation is correct, where does that leave us anarchists, who also struggle against global capitalism? First, we should be extremely hesitant to cheerlead militant Islamic resistance, except when we have reason to believe it will produce anti-authoritarian results. Solidarity with all who oppose oppression is critical for the anarchist project, but the enemy of our enemy is not always our friend: as things stand right now, Osama bin Laden and George Bush stand to gain a lot more from this conflict than the rest of us folks do. The specter of US imperialism will no doubt enable hierarchical powers in Muslim communities to strengthen their hold over others, just as terrorism has enabled Bush to consolidate his power here. We need to figure out who our allies are overseas—who fights for liberty, self-determination, and mutual aid there as we do here—and do all we can to support them.

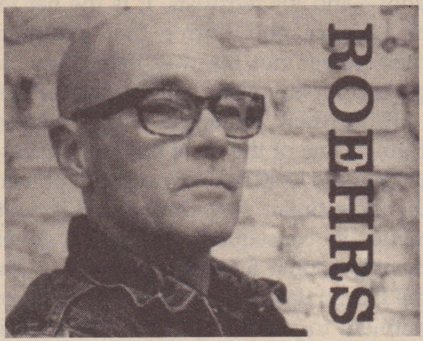
To make it easier for people elsewhere to feel that there is hope for such a struggle, so they don't settle for joining up with the lesser of two evils themselves, we need to fight hard here at home. This is the anarchist solution to the problem of foreign terrorism and totalitarianism: if we can sufficiently cripple our own rulers, foreign powers won't be able to justify their terror and tyranny by pointing to the threat our tyrants pose.

Above all, we must seize from Bush and bin Laden the initiative to define the contests of our day. As long as the principal global conflict is conceptualized as *Democracy versus Terrorism* or *The West versus Islam*, it will be increasingly difficult to mobilize struggles on other grounds for other objectives. If we hope to join great numbers of people in the US and abroad in a war against hierarchy rather than each other, we will have to frame and popularize new dichotomies.

In this sense, it is significant that the US government is taking advantage of the current climate to portray activists who have nothing to do with militant Islam as terrorists. Once enough US citizens who have nothing to do with Al Qaeda are branded with that epithet, the fault lines of conflict will be drawn within this society, rather than between it and another, and it'll be a whole new ball game. Should the overzealous FBI carelessly push things past this threshold, their repression might actually help make it clear to everyone that the most important battles transcend nationality and religion; but for that to be possible, we'll have to be tireless in supporting our targeted comrades and fearless in openly proclaiming our opposition to the system. This is another function of militant anarchist struggle in the US: to bring the war home to such an extent that it can no longer be framed as an us-versus-them conflict with foreigners, but becomes instead a confrontation between classes within this country.

To prepare for the years ahead, we should study the past decades of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as it forms the blueprint for the new world order. The fact that it has proved irresolvable thus far makes it a promising model for protracted global war… but should anyone hit upon a way of undermining that impasse, however so slightly, it might be a starting point for an escape route out of this whole mess.

For information about how to support political prisoners in the current wave of political repression, visit greenscare.org. For more ammunition, try crimethinc.com.



Soldier of Fortune

Fuck yes! That fearsome rock 'n' roll beast you know as BONECRUSHER has dropped the motherfucking hammer on you skins and punks! The new BONECRUSHER CD is called *Live at the Doll Hut*, on BONECRUSHER's own Class War Records. This is a blistering document of the raw power of a live BONECRUSHER show! This is the CD that many BONECRUSHER fans have always dreamed of—a well-recorded live show with good sound that captures the visceral danger of one of the most ferocious live bands ever!

Noah, Mike, Pat, and George come out swinging on an old BONECRUSHER blast, "Animal"—yes! We crash through "Warning You" and "Price You Pay" with the audible mayhem starting to build in the club. Song number four is new, entitled "Soldier of Fortune"— you won't soon forget the brutal rock 'n' roll that pounds you here! BONECRUSHER ups the ante with a five-song surge that will blow your brains out! Noah rips into one of the most popular BONECRUSHER songs ever, "Casualty" from the *Tomorrow Is Too Late* LP on Knockout Records. You don't even get a chance to catch your breath—the merciless assault continues with the great song "Rejected," which goes into "Sometimes."

Fuck! The boots are flying every which-a-way now! You just have time to get up off the beer-soaked floor when BONECRUSHER finishes you off with "Hell" and "The Struggle." You skinheads are fucking eviscerated! The BONECRUSHER boot party just keeps raging as you listen to "Working for Nothing," "The Fight," and "Walk the Plank." Just when you thought it might be safe to go back in the pit, THE 'CRUSHER unleashes "No Escape," back-to-back with the perennial crowd-pleaser "Corporate Nation." Fucking A!

You have to gather up the last of your strength to ride the BONECRUSHER danger train through the final two tunes, "Porn Star" and "Poverty." Fucking brilliant! This *Live at the Doll Hut* CD is that rare disc that captures a band at the top of their game with excellent sound! You must get this important slice of American rock 'n' roll history immediately!

Write to Class War Records, PO Box 444, 1001 Avenida Pico, Suite C, San Clemente, CA, 92673. www.classwarmusic.com, bonecrusher@hotmail.com.

Fucking fuck!!! Scotty and his great Tank Crimes record label has smashed it up again! The needle on the hardcore punk-meter gets completely buried when San Francisco's DEADFALL crashes your party! The new DEADFALL EP is called *Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay*. Holy crap! DEADFALL keeps releasing some of the most inspired hardcore punk in the entire United States. The ruthless punk salvos that DEADFALL release devastate everything in their path! You lucky fucks get beaten senseless by hardcore punk music with important lyrics. Side A starts off with a bleak thought about the frustrating con-

dition of the world we live in. In "Counting" DEADFALL laments: "Another figure without a face / Senseless numbers in a vacant race* / Thousands born each day as hundreds die / All we can do is multiply and divide." That lyric is pretty uplifting, isn't it? Well, guess what? Nic, Scotty, Mark, and Andrei have more bad news for you! In "Evacuation Plan" DEADFALL forces you to confront the grim reality that the greedy powerbrokers have foisted on you pathetic drones. Read this shit: "This situation is critical / There is a collapse at hand / I'm standing at ground zero / With no escape plan / We are a target with good reason / And we plan bullshit routines / We should be planning our evacuation." The human race is fucked! The beautiful irony of this state of affairs is there is no place to evacuate to! Remember what your grandmother said: "You made your bed, now you are going to have to sleep in it!" Song three on side one contains the most important wisdom DEADFALL has to share. "Seize the Day" is more pertinent than ever for all the reasons enumerated in "Evacuation Plan." No one knows what lies ahead—we fucking don't know if we will see one more sunrise! Wake up punks! Listen to what DEADFALL sings about in "Seize the Day": "I didn't ask to be born, but I don't want to die / I can't think of an afterlife while I'm still alive / I won't waste my time, I won't "Play the Game" / As apathy surrounds me, I didn't want to be the same / No time for religion, no time for TV / All I know is my time is fleeting / And this life is all I've got / This is my world, like it or not... / Seize the day / Gotta seize the day."

Punk rockers! Don't be alarmed! Side B on the new Tank Crimes DEADFALL EP starts off with some disorienting surf music. This ploy is to lull you fucks into complacency so that DEADFALL can beat you up when you let your guard down! After the instrumental bit, DEADFALL beats the fuck out of your puny little atrophied brainstem again! "One Man's Dog (Is Another Man's God)" makes an amusing analogy between Son of Sam's Dog's order to kill innocent people and George Bush's "Born-Again" genocide perpetrated on helpless civilians in different theaters around the world. One difference, of course, is the vast superiority of Bush's body count. The spineless little mama's boy George Bush would not have the balls to walk up to someone in a car and shoot them in the face at point-blank range, like David Berkowitz did. It's much easier from thirty thousand feet!

The final song on this great DEADFALL EP is one of the finest moments in DEADFALL's illustrious career! "It's Okay" is a bitter, seething opus that most punk bands will never come close to achieving. The music on "It's Okay" is so well crafted and so infectious that this song will replace "Out of Step (With the World)" in punk mythology. "It's Okay" is a venomous indictment of big business and organized religion. "It's Okay" links Hitler and Jesus like two peas in a pod. Read this scary slap-in-the-face: "It's okay - we've got the bombs / It's okay - we've got the tanks / it's okay - we've got the guns / We are the force to reckon with / it's okay - we've got the oil / It's okay - we've got the gold / It's okay - we've got the cause / We buy and take what won't be sold / Drop your empathy, we drop bombs as children scream / It doesn't bother us cause no-one hears it / We've got missionaries, monks, merchants, mercenaries and moguls spreading love in Christian spirit / It's okay – we've got the murder / It's okay – we've got the rape / It's okay – who needs justice? / We've got the kind of crime that pays / It's okay – we've got the power / It's okay – we have the say / It's okay – we've got the empire / Nothing will stand in our way / Drop your logic thought, this is no place for sense / As we conquer to the point of extinction / Jesus and Hitler making castles in the sand / It's okay – don't think about it / Close your eyes it'll go away / Forget what you know, believe in what you can't / Destroying civilization for the betterment of man / This contradiction is our utopia / this confusion is Amerikkkaaa / Tighten up your own blindfold / Tie your own noose / Keep lying to yourself." Fucking amazing!

This is tough punk rock combined with all-too-accurate lyrics! To order this disturbing slab of no-holds-barred hardcore punk contact www.TankCrimes.com.

Fuck yes! You cretins get a kick in the head by a great new band on Mr. Yannick's consistently excellent Feral Ward Records. These hard rocking punks call themselves CRIMINAL DAMAGE and their self-titled LP is brilliant from start to finish!

Mr. Paul Burdette from the well-respected band TRAGEDY sings lead vocals on CRIMINAL DAMAGE. The down-in-the-trenches style of rock 'n' roll that climbs out of these record grooves has the solid street underpinnings of THE BELTONES or 1982-era BLITZ. The songs have raw power without sacrificing melody. The well-crafted Oi! punk flavored rock on this LP holds deep-seated ideals up to the light for examination. The first number on this long player grabs you by the short hairs and won't let go! "The Power of Fools" bludgeons you with a one-two guitar-and-vocal crush while observing how easily the frail humans are manipulated. "Time won't ease the suffering / We fight for what we need...The radio tells us what we need / [and as the TEMPLARS sing] we don't care!" "No Turning Back" keeps the rock 'n' roll frothing at the mouth. Next is "Last Chance." Read on: "Pushing bibles, pushing politics / It's all the same / Means dictating ends in a mindfuck power game / What you want is something that you'll never get from me / Complete control, you want it all / In the name of anarchy / Controlling peoples' minds with their hearts / It's nothing new / Don't need it from the pope and I sure as hell don't need it from you / You talk about oppression and you talk of anarchy / But speak it like a fascist / Just don't fucking speak to me / Last chance! Last chance! / We don't need your bullshit / We don't need your attitude / We don't wanna be your foot soldiers anymore / I'm sick of talk, I'm sick of all the damage that you do / I'm sick of all the dogma that you use and you abuse / Your lust for power has had it's day / And now that day is through / We won't take any more abuse / We're fucking done with you." Hell yes!

Those words ring with a brutally honest discomfort. "We don't want to be your foot soldiers anymore" is a poignant statement for these times.

"World Is Not Enough" nails abuse of power right on the head! Give these lyrics a spin: "Born into this world with all you need / But the world is not enough / Pushing your way through life using bower and greed / But the world is not enough / And how could you think you'd ever need more? / But you brought that shit to our front door / And now you've found it's time to turn back to the lies that you left waiting intact / No time to burn your bridges / Burn it all and move / No way to find your future / Not with a past full of lies / You could never go back / Wearing guilt like a badge upon your sleeve / But the world is not enough / Not sure of the things you do believe / But you know that the key to your power is found in the way that you push other people around / But you still didn't find the answers and your problems did not go away / No time to burn your bridges / Burn it all and move on / No way to find your future / Not with a past full of lies / You could never go back / Don't know

what the hell you want to be / But this place won't satisfy your dreams / We've seen your kind some and go before / And we'll be sure to help you to find the door."

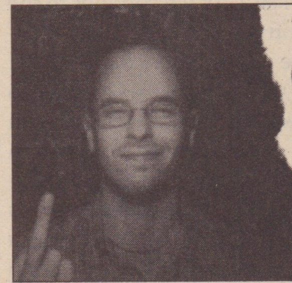
CRIMINAL DAMAGE digs beneath the layers of bullshit in our cluttered lives. When speaking of power-drunk individuals CRIMINAL DAMAGE offers: "the key to your power is in the way you push other people around." This top-flight band pounds through other desperate frustrating, topics about these United States. Listen to "On Goes the Fight," "What Are We Gonna Be," "Tomorrow," & "Anesthesia." Fuck! There is not a bad tune on this LP!

This is a stunning piece of work with a rock 'n' roll pedigree that could stand proudly next to the *One Law for Them*-era 4-SKINS material!!! Order this essential record from Mr. Yannick at Feral Ward records immediately!

Alex and his Pure Punk Records from Parma, Italy have a fresh slice of punk history available for you knuckleheads! Pure Punk presents the SOLDIER DOLLS from Cardiff, Wales vintage 1981 to 1985. These inspired punks created a bit of a stir in the UK during their heyday. It would have been easy to miss hearing SOLDIER DOLLS with the plethora of great punk bands during the early '80s. We are lucky that Pure Punk resurrected these fine recordings. Songs included are from the ten-track samplers session, the *What Do They Knew* session, the *Taste of Blood* session, the *Cradle to the Grave* Session, as well as two live tunes. Some of the standout tracks are "Be Like You" and "Rising Crime" from the aforementioned *What Do They Know* EP. One strong tune you must have is "Iron Curtain" from the *Taste of the Blood* session. The sound on the studio portions of LP is very good. Alex and Pure Punk Records have done all of the punk kingdom a valuable service by digging these journeymen punk veterans out of their dusty crypt. Contact Alex at Pure Punk Records, Casella Postale 214, 43100 Parma, Italy, www.purepunk.it.

TKO Records has a tasty punk rock double-double morsel for you numbskulls. You losers are lavished with a two-disc set of the SMUT PEDDLERS *Live at DiPiazza's*. The combo-pack includes a sixty-five-minute DVD of the SMUT PEDDLERS singing and playing their asses off at some hapless Southern California restaurant in top form. The SMUT PEDDLERS are natural punk rockers—they make strong as shit rock 'n' roll look easy! These fucks have been very consistent over the years—their unrepentant bad behavior has become the stuff of legends! On this DVD you get it all: the lousy jokes from the stage, the high school level badgering of the audience, and of course, the predictable lowest-caliber-of-rock-and-roll-fans-in-the-US, as well as a twenty-one track music CD of the show. THE SMUT PEDDLERS have pulled off a major coup! This band is a collection of seasoned veteran punk rockers who by every logical law of nature should be incarcerated or dead by now. Flying in the face of all odds these fuck keep getting better and better! This DVD/CD package captures these zany motherfuckers in all their glory. If you dumb down a DUANE PETERS AND THE HUNNS fan with a tire iron you get a SMUT PEDDLERS fan. If you give a STITCHES fan a frontal lobotomy you get a SMUT PEDDLERS fan. These pinheads can rock circles around most young punk bands! If you like your fans to have the IQ of a houseplant, this is clearly the cream of the crop! The SMUT PEDDLERS have forgotten more about punk rock than most of you dribble-dicks will ever experience! This band deserves your respect and needs your money! Get your SMUT PEDDLERS merchandise from TKO Records, 8941 Atlanta Ave #505, Huntington Beach, CA 92646, www.tkorecords.com.

Until next month, see you fucks at the bar!



THREE CHORD POLITICS

chris hubbard

So, this month I took over the coordinator position at *Maximum Rocknroll* previously held by Paul. In a lot of ways it was not too much of a change, since I've been living here at the MRR house for the last year or so and already have an intimate knowledge of how the magazine is run. It's exciting and daunting at the same time, however, as Paul was an excellent coordinator during his brief tenure and leaves big shoes to fill. My immediate plan for the magazine is to not bring about its complete and utter downfall. I suppose we'll all have to see how it goes...

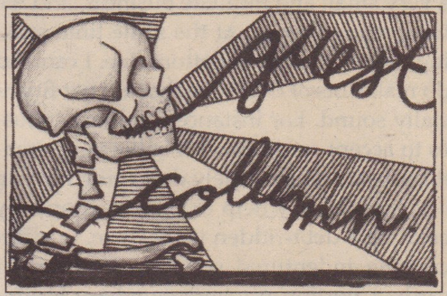
This being my first column for *Maximum,* I figured I'd write a bit about myself and how I became involved with music. My family moved to Massachusetts from Maine when I was three years old and I grew up in a small town in the suburbs of Boston, about 45 minutes outside the city. Many weekends during the second half of my high school years in the mid/late-'90s were spent in places like the Rat in Boston or the Middle East in Cambridge, seeing shows by current local groups like the Showcase Showdown or the Trouble, or the infrequent appearance by older ones still kicking around such as Gang Green or the Freeze. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

My life during junior high was unremarkable to say the least. Time outside school was spent alone in my room, either reading or listening to the radio. I don't think I really had any ambitions or dreams to speak of back then. I did love music though, and this was the early '90s—a time when, not entirely unlike the English punk explosion of the late '70s, something from the "underground" momentarily and inexplicably caught the attention of the mainstream. Thanks to Nirvana and the bands that rode in the wake of their success, music for a very brief time no longer seemed solely the property of a small handful of record producers, industry suits, and larger-than-life rock star caricatures. In the eyes of many young kids, it was something new, exciting, and, mostly importantly, achievable. I'm sure across the country thousands and thousands of high school garage bands must have been inspired to pick up instruments and start to play "alternative" music—I know because it happened in my town, the sleepiest, squarest place you can imagine. I distinctly remember at the end of my 8th grade year, only a few months before I graduated and went on to high school, several of my peers spontaneously formed a band. They were lead by a kid named Shane, an outsider. He had moved to our town the year before and started attending school there. Shane was unmistakably different—sarcastic, a bit wild, the only boy with long hair anyone knew of. His mentality was foreign to that of our small community; he seemed to not give a fuck, and no one could figure it out. As far as I know, Shane's band's one performance was at our school's "talent show" in the spring of 1994. In retrospect, the "set," consisting of only one song, an original, was probably sloppy, amateurish, and heavily derivative of popular music on the radio at the time. However, to me, someone who had hardly seen more than a dozen music videos (my family didn't have cable so I couldn't watch MTV), much less an actual live band, it was mind-blowing, something I had never imagined before. Here was someone just like me who had written a song himself, gotten up on stage, and performed it. And it was actually *good.*

It would not be much of an exaggeration

to say that my life was changed at that moment. Although I didn't completely understand it, for the first time, I saw the possibility of a world outside of the one I knew—something beyond the unspoken cradle-to-grave life trajectory of mainstream suburban America. More than anything, though, I remember a feeling of anxious disappointment when it was over. How could I go on with my life as it had been? I had only just realized it, but there was nothing in it remotely as compelling or exciting as the creative expression of playing in a band. (That might sound silly or melodramatic, but I know some people out there will understand what I'm talking about.) That summer, the understanding that I *had* to do something, *had* to react somehow to what I'd seen, subconsciously echoed in my head, until finally, the week before I started high school, I picked up a guitar, and started to learn how to play... Improbable as it might have seemed back then—though at the same time, perhaps inevitable—this lead to starting a band with my friends in high school when we discovered punk, to moving to New York and playing in a group that put out a record, to touring across the country. I find myself now in San Francisco, a part of *Maximum Rocknroll*. It all starts with that spark, over a decade ago, that taught me that my life is only what I make out of it...

Well OK, I think that's enough sappy clichéd bullshit for the time being. Next month, maybe I'll write about something punk. Feel free to get in touch via email at chris@maximumrocknroll.com or via the MRR PO Box.



The following are the answers Kent McClard of Ebullition Records sent to us in response to the "Is Business Killing Punk" questionnaire we sent out for the last two months issues.

Preface:

Ebullition is 99% a distribution and 1% a record label. I think this is an important distinction to make, as operating a record label can and probably should be a part time job or a labor of love, while operating a distro is a day in and day out job.

Most of these questions seem to be directed to record labels but not really to other more organized punk business structures such as distributions or stores. To run a successful distribution or store you have to have regular business hours. You have to go to work five or six days a week. Someone needs to be there filling orders every day, day in and day out.

I could easily run my record label as a hobby. It would be simply impossible to run my distribution as a hobby. Running a distribution is a job.

What are your core business ethics?

Try to stay small. Try to stay true to my hardcore roots. Try not to get ripped off. Try to make a living. Try not to become something that I hate.

What does it mean to be independent? Why is it important to be independent?

Not being tied into the corporate structure and being able to make your own decisions without regard for your investors, parent company, or board of directors. Being able to make decisions that are *not* in your best financial interests based solely on a political or ethical agenda. I think it is important to be independent for the simple reason that our world is slowly getting more and more centralized and that centralization is bad for democracy and bad for a free society.

Politics in America today are defined by the interests of big business. Why? Because big business has all the money. As more and more business, jobs, and services are centralized the people will lose more and more control over their own lives. This trend of centralized business conglomerates is slowly funneling all the resources of the world into the hands of a few powerful entities. This is dangerous. If the trend in business and government continues I can imagine a time in our not too distant future when multi-national corporations will replace governments. Right now we see that happening as multi-national corporations use "international law" to force countries to comply with "free trade."

What makes a "punk" business different than any other business? Can we agree on what the ethics of punk business are?

No, I don't think we can agree. Everyone will have different ideas and different views on this. Each of us has to define our own ethics. The important thing for the punk community to do is to promote discussion so that those of us that run punk businesses will think about ethics.

What is the definition of DIY?

Doing things for yourself not because you have to but because you want to. The problem with DIY today is that too many people think DIY is what you are forced to do when some huge entity won't help you.

DIY today as you wait for something better is not DIY. To me the most important aspect of DIY is the understanding that independence, autonomy, freedom, & individuality are key to a free society. If we as people want democracy, equality, and freedom then we *must* take control of our lives. DIY is responsibility. Take control of your life. If you don't then someone else will.

Slavery is one of the most fundamental tools of human society. Each of us is a stone's throw from becoming slaves in one way or another. Society is constantly chipping away at freedom. To me DIY is a philosophy of resistance. It is a political action.

Is it wrong to deal with major labels? What about labels that use major-owned (or partly major-owned) distributors?

I don't like the word "wrong." That is a subjective concept. I personally do not believe in "right" and "wrong" or "good" and "evil." With that said, I personally do not like to deal with major labels and I don't really care all that much about bands that sign to major labels. I would never allow Ebullition to be associated with these sorts of distributors or labels. Monopolies and multi-nationals and multi-million dollar companies with massive budgets and massive work forces are the antithesis of what Ebullition is about. Small is beautiful.

My goal as a distributor and as a label is to exist as small and independently as possible. I have no interest in endless growth. No interest in dominating or monopolizing any situation. Big business is something I am against. That is why I have run and operated Ebullition for the last 20 years.

I prefer a time in history when small business was the standard. When every town was filled with people running their own businesses; people taking their destiny in their hands. I don't eat at chain restaurants for the same reason why I haven't tried to turn Ebullition into a major distributor. I like small "mom and pop" style businesses and that is how I envision Ebullition. I want Ebullition to be a family business. I don't want to be any bigger than that. A lot of people in this industry are always pushing us to be bigger and bigger, but honestly, I just don't want that.

I think Ebullition could be 20 times as large. I could probably make 10 times what I make now if I really wanted to commit to being a real distributor. But I just don't want to do that. I am not saying that I am better and that what I do with Ebullition is "right." It is just what I want to do.

I want our world to be de-centralized and Ebullition is my way of contributing to

that goal. Big business is all about centralization and mass marketing. Our punk community needs lots of small distributors that can represent all the different niches within punk rock rather than just a few mega-distributors. I started Ebullition to represent the hardcore that I loved and knew. Ebullition will never be a mega-distributor. That is extremely important to me.

Is a punk band still punk if they sign to a major label? Is there ever a good excuse to sign to a major label?

Depends on your definition of punk and the era you existed in. Punk is evolving. The Sex Pistols and the Clash were certainly punk bands. If they existed today I would not feel that way.

I wouldn't get so concerned with judging those that sign to major labels. I would instead focus on building a strong alternative. We don't need a witchhunt, we need a culture of independence. Threat by example is far more important than an Inquisition. That is a lesson I've learned in the last 20 years. I have wasted far too much of my time trying to be an Inquisitor. That was all time I could have spent trying to set a better example.

What can we do to take punk out of the hands of big business? Should we even worry about big business?

Create and maintain an alternative. If you don't like big business then you have to support an alternative. Punk can be against big business, but the only way to actually keep big business out is through effective alternatives. That is essentially my goal with Ebullition. Provide an alternative. My goal was to support hardcore by providing an independent alternative.

And, yes, we should worry about big business. Not just in the punk community but in the larger scope of our world. Big business is out to get us. I honestly think that big business is perhaps the most dangerous threat to the environment, freedom, democracy, and the general welfare of human kind. As business gets bigger and bigger it losses more and more humanity. Smaller business models are more responsive to human needs.

Is it wrong to buy/sell bootlegs?

Depends on the bootleg. I own lots of bootlegs and am glad they exist. But it is shitty when bootleggers are only concerned with profit rather than providing a great opportunity for someone to own some classic release. The biggest problem in punk rock with regards to bootlegs is with T-shirts rather than music. I guarantee that there are ads in this issue of *MRR* for bootleg T-shirts. Does anyone care?

If a band doesn't exist and they don't provide shirts then that is probably okay, but shirt bootleggers are often bootlegging shirts from bands that are still around playing shows and trying to sell shirts so they have enough gas to get to the next town.

Bootlegs are one of those things that has to be judged individually. Ebullition will occasionally carry bootlegs if the bootlegger doesn't seem like a scum fuck, the prices aren't ridiculous, and the bootleg isn't something that exists legitimately.

Is it okay to trade/download mp3s of DIY punk bands without paying?

Abso-fucking-lutely. I don't care about this at all. I think this is an issue that is irritating for trendy music, and not for hardcore. I have been listening to my Articles of Faith records for 20 years. If 20 years ago I had downloaded these LPs rather than buying them, I would be kicking myself in the teeth right now for my stupidity.

If you like something then you should buy it. If you want people to keep making music and if you want to see bands tour then you need to support that system in some way. I think downloading music is totally fine, but people need to act responsibly. When you like something you should use your purchase as a way to support that sort of product. I often buy things for the simple reason that I want to make sure that my interests are represented. I buy all kinds of things that I could get for free if I wanted to, but at some point you have to realize that it is more important to support things that you like than to get shit for free. As always, as consumers, we need to use our money as our vote. If you never buy anything then your interests in the world will never be represented.

Is it okay to make a living off of punk?

I am not sure. I do it. I have not worked a regular job in 15 years. I am glad to be able to make a living from something I once loved. I say "once" loved because working at something you love can change that relationship. I work 6 days a week, and I average 50-60 hours of work each week. I could work less but in order to make enough money to guarantee my economic future I have to work long and hard hours. That can squeeze the love out of you.

I am also forced to listen to hundreds of terrible records and CDs each year as I try to find the things that I think our customers will want to buy. And I am forced to tell hundreds and hundreds of people "No." I lose a little bit of my love every time I am forced to say no to someone's request for aid. Saying no is a bummer, but a reality that hammers on me each and every day.

There is a price to be paid for making a living off of punk rock. Everyone that truly loved punk and found a way to live off of it will understand that price. I still love hardcore, but not in the same way. I will be the first to admit that living this life has changed me in ways I am not always happy about. However, it has to be that way. If hardcore is going to exist outside of big business then some people are going to have to live off of punk rock. There is no other way around it. Distributing records and CDs takes work. Actual work. It isn't easy work. And if you want to make money you will have to work hard.

Life takes money. Health insurance, children, families, retirement, savings, rent, mortgage, food, clothes, auto insurance, etc, etc... For a long time I made almost nothing working for Ebullition. When I started I worked for peanuts. I made $60 off of the first 3,000 Spitboy LPs that I released on Ebullition. My first full time year working with Ebullition where I didn't have a side job I made about $2,000. For many years I lived in the living room at some friend's house because I couldn't afford rent. As the years went on I started making more and more, but it still wasn't enough. There came a day when I realized that I could not work this hard for so little. I decided that I had to find a way to make money or I had to give up on Ebullition and get a real job. It worked out for me, and now Ebullition provides me with a good income.

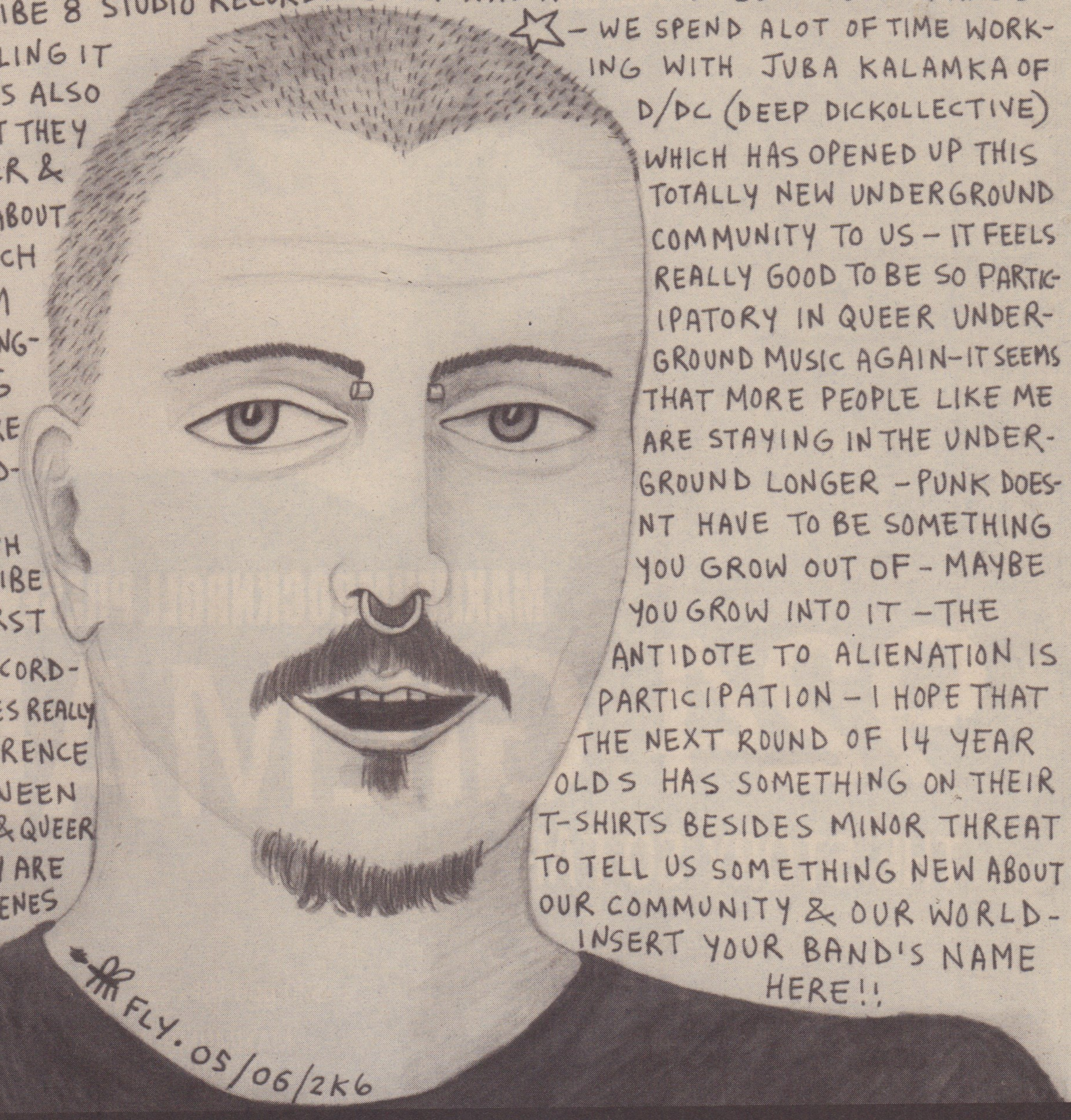
The lesson I leaned was that alternatives have to be viable. In my eyes Ebullition has been a success because we have stayed true to our hardcore roots, we have maintained a very small and intimate business, and we have made money. At the same time making money is not the bottom line. I can and do make lots of decisions that are not financially sound. For instance Ebullition refuses to accept credit cards. I believe the credit cards are an extremely damaging force in our world. They help to enslave people by creating a debt-ridden work force, in affect creating indentured servants. With credit cards a portion of every purchase is funneled off to some of the most insidious banking institutions in our society. So I say no. We don't take them. Does it cost me business? Yes. But that is OK by me. I can live with that.

This life isn't for everyone. Sometimes I feel that it isn't for me. It is hard. It takes hard work. It works for me. But even so I understand that compromises have been made. It is a give and take. Some days feel like failure. Some times I feel enslaved by my job. But the bottom line is that I made this life. I will live with that.

PEOPS

THERES SOMETHING REALLY CHARMING ABOUT 14 YEAR OLDS WEARING MINOR THREAT T-SHIRTS – MINOR THREAT HASNT PUT ANYTHING OUT SINCE THE 80'S WHEN THEY CREATED THE ENTIRE STRAIGHT EDGE MOVEMENT – 14 YEAR OLDS TODAY WERE NOT EVEN BORN WHEN THAT HAPPENED – WHEN I WAS IN SCHOOL WITH JEFF NELSON (THE DRUMMER IN MINOR THREAT) HE CAME TO ONE OF MY PARTIES – HIT ON MY GIRLFRIEND & I STOPPED TALKING TO HIM – I DONT THINK ANYONE REALIZED AT THE TIME JUST HOW AMAZING THE D.C. SCENE WAS – I RAN INTO AN INTERVIEW WITH JEFF & IAN RECENTLY ONLINE ABOUT DISCORD & HOW THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES – I THINK ITS ONE OF THE BIGGEST PUNK SUCCESS STORIES BECAUSE THEY HAVENT COMPROMISED – I JUST SPENT ALMOST A WEEK REMIXING & MASTERING THE LAST TRIBE 8 STUDIO RECORDING – IT WAS KIND OF SAD BECAUSE THEY ARE BASICALLY CALLING IT QUITS BUT ITS ALSO AMAZING THAT THEY WERE TOGETHER & TOURING FOR ABOUT 12 YEARS WHICH MAKES THEM ONE OF THE LONGEST RUNNING PUNK/HOMOCORE BANDS AROUND – NOW WE ARE WORKING WITH LYNEE OF TRIBE 8 ON HER FIRST HOMOHOP RECORDINGS – THERES REALLY LITTLE DIFFERENCE TODAY BETWEEN QUEER PUNK & QUEER HIP HOP – THEY ARE BOTH TINY SCENES ☆→

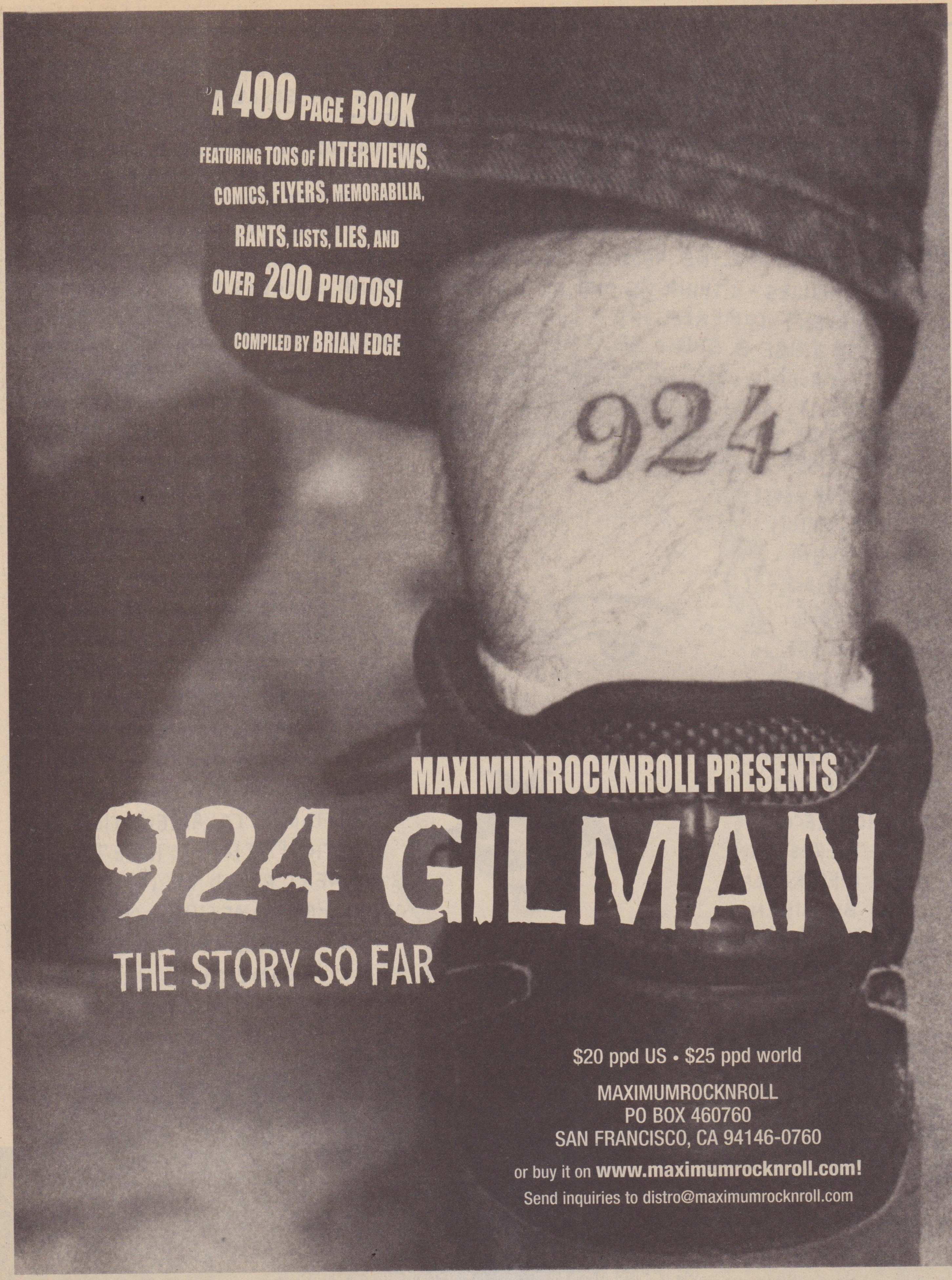
☆ – WE SPEND ALOT OF TIME WORKING WITH JUBA KALAMKA OF D/DC (DEEP DICKOLLECTIVE) WHICH HAS OPENED UP THIS TOTALLY NEW UNDERGROUND COMMUNITY TO US – IT FEELS REALLY GOOD TO BE SO PARTICIPATORY IN QUEER UNDERGROUND MUSIC AGAIN – IT SEEMS THAT MORE PEOPLE LIKE ME ARE STAYING IN THE UNDERGROUND LONGER – PUNK DOESNT HAVE TO BE SOMETHING YOU GROW OUT OF – MAYBE YOU GROW INTO IT – THE ANTIDOTE TO ALIENATION IS PARTICIPATION – I HOPE THAT THE NEXT ROUND OF 14 YEAR OLDS HAS SOMETHING ON THEIR T-SHIRTS BESIDES MINOR THREAT TO TELL US SOMETHING NEW ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY & OUR WORLD – INSERT YOUR BAND'S NAME HERE!!



Eliot Daughtry aka Koyote – 05/06/2K6 – NYC

I met Eliot i think in 1995 in Chicago while i was on tour with God Is My Co–Pilot – he & his partner Kriss put us up & threw us a party & made us a huge gourmet breakfast in the morning – so of course we all became friends for life – currently Eliot & Kriss live in Oakland CA at the Killer Banshee Compound & are active in many aspects of creativity – they work in all mediums from lo to high tech – Eliot makes beautiful stained glass & etched glass pieces as well as incredible paintings – they have a recording studio in their space & have also done a bunch of film work – in 2003 Eliot & Kriss put together the sound & images for the PEOPs show tour which combined live computer animation with a pre–recorded soundtrack – there is not enough room here to give them the praises they deserve so please check out the website – www.killerbanshee.com

to contact Fly email fly@bway.net – please put MRR in the subject so i know its not spam – website = www.bway.net/~fly – PEOPs #3 zine & DogDayz zine are currently available for $5 each postpaid in the US – write to Fly PO Box 1318 Cooper Stn NYC NY 10276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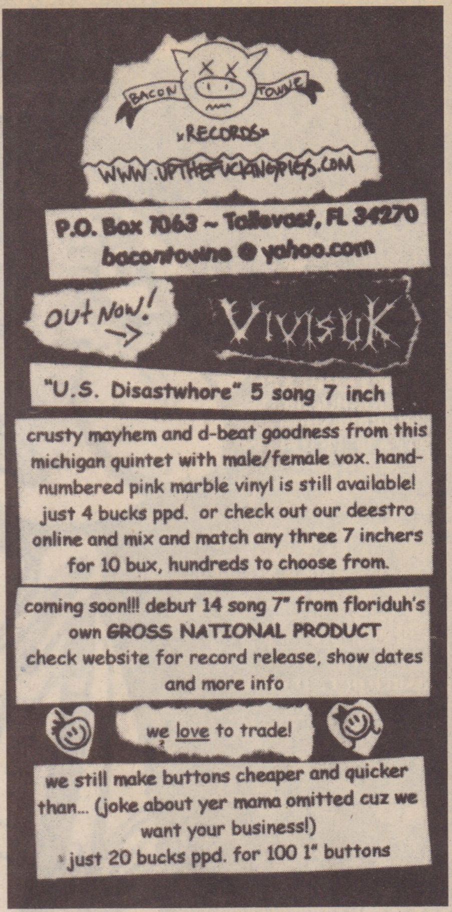
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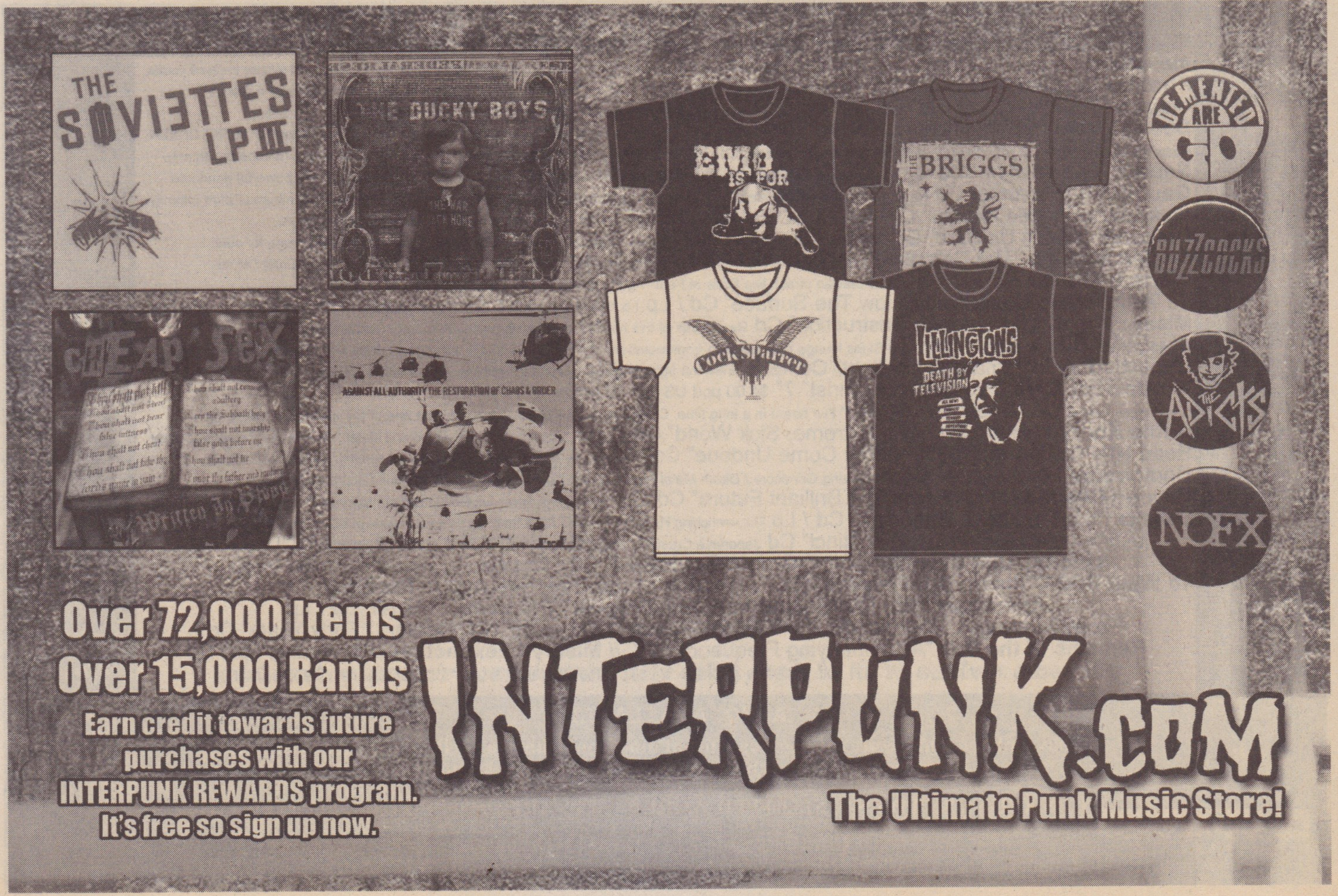
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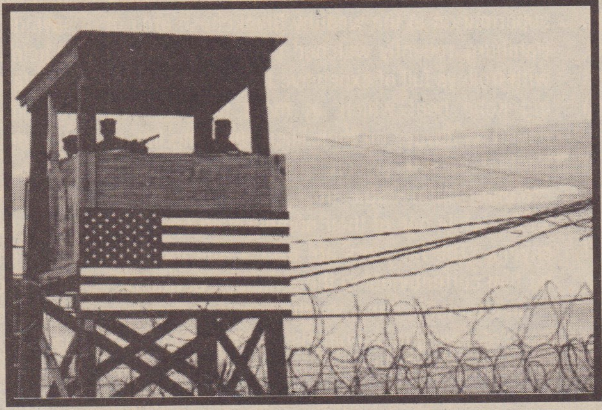
MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #278 COMPILED BY ARIEL CELESTE AND CHRIS HUBBARD

U.N. URGES CLOSURE OF GUANTANAMO DETENTION FACILITY

By Colum Lynch
From an article in the *Washington Post*



A U.N. anti-torture panel Friday called on the United States to close its prison for terrorism suspects at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to expressly ban controversial interrogation techniques, and to halt the transfer of detainees to countries with a history of abuse and torture. The U.N. panel, charged with monitoring compliance with the 1984 Convention Against Torture, which the United States has ratified, also asserted that the CIA imprisonment of suspects in secret detention facilities without access to the International Committee of the Red Cross constituted a clear violation of the treaty. Bush administration officials countered that the U.N. Committee Against Torture had not given the United States a fair hearing, that it had overreached its authority by calling for Guantanamo's closure, and that its report is riddled with errors and misstatements. "We acknowledge that there were serious incidents of abuse. We've all seen Abu Ghraib," the State Department's top lawyer, John B. Bellinger III, told reporters. But "clearly our record has improved over the last few years," he said.

The 11-page report was issued one day after two Guantanamo Bay detainees tried to kill themselves by overdosing on antidepressants. The attempts brought to 41 the number of inmates who have tried to commit suicide since 2002, Rear Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., commander of Guantanamo Bay detainee operations, said Friday. After the unsuccessful suicide attempts, Guantanamo Bay inmates rioted, attacking guards with electric fans and other improvised weapons after a prisoner lured them into a cell by faking an attempt to hang himself. Guards subdued them by firing sponge grenades and five rounds of rubber balls from a 12-gauge shotgun, Harris said.

The U.N. report was a rebuke for the Bush administration and some of the main counterterrorism approaches it adopted after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. It was delivered as the United States faces increasing pressure from international critics, including U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, to close the Guantanamo Bay prison. The administration has engaged in an internal debate over the fate of the controversial island facility. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Friday that President Bush has made it clear "he doesn't want the United States to be the world's jailers, that we at some point in the future would very much like to see Guantanamo Bay closed down." But, McCormack added, "at the moment, it's housing some dangerous people."

The U.N. panel, made up of nine international experts, said the United States "should cease to detain any person at Guantanamo Bay and close this detention facility, permit access by the detainees to judicial process or release them as soon as possible." The committee urged the Bush administration to establish a law criminalizing torture and to eliminate some of its most controversial interrogation techniques, including sexual humiliation, the use of dogs to induce fear and "water boarding," a practice that involves simulating the sensation of near-drowning. It also pressed the administration to "promptly, thoroughly, and impartially investigate" senior military or civilian officials responsible for "authorizing, acquiescing or consenting" to torture committed by subordinates. The report urged the United States to disclose and publicly condemn the existence of any secret prisons. The Washington Post reported last year that the CIA has maintained secret facilities in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The panel said the United States "should ensure no one is detained in any secret detention facility under its de facto effective control." It said: "Detaining persons in such conditions constitutes, per se, a violation of the convention."

There are about 460 foreign prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. About 287 detainees have left the facility, including 192 who were released and 95 who were transferred to more than 16 countries. The United States recently transferred 15 Saudi nationals to the Saudi government's custody and sent five Chinese Muslims to Albania. White House spokesman Tony Snow defended the Bush administration's policies at Guantanamo Bay, saying that "everything that is done in terms of questioning detainees is fully within the boundaries of American law."

The Bush administration sent a large delegation to Geneva earlier this month to answer the U.N. committee's questions. It also submitted a 184-page defense of its treatment of detainees in its fight against terrorism. "It was not a particularly auspicious time for the United States to have to be filing a periodic report before the convention against torture, in the aftermath of Abu Ghraib," said Bellinger, who headed the U.S. delegation. "But we take our obligations seriously, and we did not shy away from going to Geneva." Bellinger said that the United States "has respect for the committee" and that it will comply with a request to provide additional responses to questions by next year. But he said the committee's report is "skewed and reaches well beyond the scope and mandate of the committee." For instance, there "is nothing in the convention that says anything about holding people indefinitely..." he said. "So it's outside the scope for them to be calling for the closure of Guantanamo."

Human rights and civil rights advocates have raised concerns about the fate of those kept at Guantanamo Bay, and of those who are transferred to other countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, which has a history of abusing political detainees. They noted that the committee's report has undercut confidence in the United States' ability to ensure the safety of detainees who are transferred abroad. "The message from the torture committee leaves no doubt that the U.S. policies and practices at home and abroad violated bedrock principles against torture and abuse," said Jamil Dakwar, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union. Rights advocates pressed the United States to accept the committee's recommendations. Gabor Rona, an expert on the committee at the New York based-advocacy groups Human Rights First, urged the United States to "take immediate steps to implement" legislation by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) that would establish "a single clear interrogation standard for all U.S. officials that clearly prohibits all forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of anyone in U.S. custody, anywhere in the world."

In the report issued Friday, described as an "advance unedited version," the committee said it welcomes the U.S. commitment that officials from all U.S. government agencies, including contractors, "are prohibited from engaging in torture at all times and in all places." It also welcomed the U.S. pledge not to transfer terrorism suspects to countries where they would "more likely than not" face torture. But the committee expressed skepticism about the United States' commitment to comply with such pledges, citing concern about the adequacy of a U.S. policy of obtaining "diplomatic assurances" against torture from countries with poor rights records. It called on the United States to "cease" the transfer of "suspects, in particular by its intelligence agencies, to states where they face the real risk of torture."

GERMAN "ROBIN HOODS" GIVE POOR A TASTE OF THE HIGH LIFE

By Allan Hall
From Anarchistnews.org

A gang of anarchist Robin Hood-style thieves, who dress as superheroes and steal expensive food from exclusive restaurants and delicatessens to give to the poor, are being hunted by police in the German city of Hamburg. Hamburg police have deployed cars, motorcycle cops and in one case a helicopter to catch this band of Robin Hood outlaws who rob from the rich to give to the poor. But so far the crooks, who target upscale restaurants and gourmet food stores, have eluded all attempts to catch them.

The gang members seemingly take delight in injecting humor into their raids, which rely on sheer numbers and the confusion caused by their presence. After they plundered Kobe beef fillets, champagne and smoked salmon from a gourmet store on the exclusive Elbastrasse, they presented the cashier with a bouquet of flowers before making their getaway.

The latest robbery is part of a pattern over the past several months, suggesting that the thieves deliberately set out to highlight what they perceive as the inequality inherent in German society.

However, the authorities do not agree. Bodo Franz, a police spokesman, said: "They get off feeling they are just like Robin Hood. There are about 30 in the group. But whatever their motives, they are thieves, plain and simple."

Carsten Sievers, the manager of a luxury supermarket in the wealthy Blankenese area of Hamburg, recently watched the robbers run off with trolleys full of expensive foodstuffs, including Kobe beef which, at more than £100 a pound, is always on their illicit shopping list. In another recent swoop, the gang emptied a groaning buffet table in a top restaurant into sacks, while one of their number held up a sign saying. "The fat years are over"—the title of a hit film currently doing the rounds in Germany.

In internet statements, the gang have made a point of saying their booty is distributed to Hartz IV recipients—the poorest of Germany's long-term unemployed. The benefit is named after the disgraced Volkswagen personnel director Peter Hartz who, before he lost his job with the carmaker in a prostitutes-and-bribes scandal, devised the new means-testing which is loathed and derided by society's most economically challenged.

When the gang robbed the gourmet store in April—triggering a massive police investigation that cost £20,000 in taxpayers' money without an arrest being made—they left a note behind saying: "Without the abilities of the superheroes to help them, it would be impossible for ordinary people to survive in the city of the millionaires."

Police say they are concentrating their investigation on a loose collective of anarchists and malcontents called "Hamburg in Vain", to which they believe the superheroes belong. But they admit there is a certain panache and skill about their robberies. The gang are also behind black market cinema tickets which they distribute free to the poor, and they have printed leaflets telling passengers how to dodge ticket inspectors on the city's underground and buses. Mr Franz said: "They try to make crime fun but are politically motivated."

ARMY SUICIDES UP SINCE IRAQ WAR

By Lolita C. Baldor. Associated Press
From an article in the *Honolulu Advertiser*

The number of U.S. Army soldiers who took their own lives increased last year to the highest total since 1993, despite a growing effort by the Army to detect problems and prevent suicides. In 2005, a total of 83 soldiers committed suicide, compared with 67 in 2004, and 60 in 2003—the year U.S.-led forces invaded Iraq. The totals include regular Army soldiers and National Guard and Reserve members who were deployed on active duty.

"Although we are not alarmed by the slight increase, we do take suicide prevention very seriously," said Army spokesman Col. Joseph Curtin. "We have increased the number of combat-stress teams, increased suicide prevention and training, and we are working very aggressively to change the culture so that soldiers feel comfortable coming forward with their personal problems in a culture where historically admitting mental health issues was frowned upon."

Of the confirmed suicides last year, 25 were soldiers deployed to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars—which amounts to 40 percent of the 64 suicides by Army soldiers in Iraq since the war began in March 2003. The Army recorded 90 suicides in 1993, with a suicide rate of 14.2 per 100,000. The Army has increased the number of mental health professionals and placed combat-stress teams with units. According to the Army, there are more than 230 mental health practitioners working in Iraq and Afghanistan, compared with "about a handful" when the war began, Curtin said.

"These numbers should be a wake-up call on the mental health impact of this war," said Paul Rieckhoff, executive director of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "One in three soldiers will come back with post-traumatic stress disorder or comparable mental health issues, or depression and severe anxiety." Rieckhoff, who was a platoon leader in Iraq, said solders there face increased stress because they are often deployed to the warfront several times, they are engaged in urban combat and their enemy blends in with the population, making it more difficult to tell friend from foe. "You don't get much time to rest and with the increased insurgency, your chances of getting killed or wounded are growing," he said. "The Army is trying harder, but they've got an incredibly long way to go."

BRITAIN CONFIRMS MEETING OF WORLD POWERS ON IRAN

From an article in the *Khaleej Times*

Senior officials from the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany will meet in London to discuss the next steps on Iran's disputed nuclear program, a British official confirmed. The meeting of political directors was postponed to allow the European Union trio more time to prepare a package of incentives aimed at getting Teheran to freeze a uranium enrichment program the West says could be used to make atomic bombs. Teheran says it needs the nuclear technology for power stations.

Despite divisions, officials from the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany will try to agree on what action to take next with Iran. The EU trio is working on a plan of incentives, which could include an offer of a light-water reactor but Iran last week ruled out halting its sensitive nuclear work even in return for incentives.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Sunday the European powers had not asked Washington to provide Iran with security guarantees although some diplomats say the EU trio want some kind of security framework to make it more difficult for Teheran to turn down. Europe may still find a formula that allows for some security pledge to Iran despite Washington's reluctance to give a guarantee of its own. The United States says it wants to find a diplomatic solution to the standoff with Iran but has also refused to rule out military action.

VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN DARFUR AS PEACE PROCESS STALLS

By Xan Rice
From an article in the *Guardian*

With Darfur's remaining rebels still refusing to sign a peace deal, fighters that were united against the Sudanese government have turned on each other. Around Tawilla thousands of civilians have been displaced since the beginning of the year following deadly violence between two ethnically-divided factions of the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), Darfur's largest rebel movement.

In what has become a turf war for control of rebel-held territory, gunmen on pick-up trucks and horseback have been burning huts, killing, looting, and even raping women, in raids just as deadly as those of the Arab "Janjaweed" militia. Villages that had been emptied due to raids by government forces are once again deserted. Camps for displaced people on the outskirts of town lie abandoned, their terrified former residents having barricaded themselves in makeshift shelters against the razor wire surrounding the African Union peacekeepers' base. All but one international NGO have left. "Initially the trouble here was the government forces," said an AU military observer based in Tawilla, two hours' drive west of the state capital, El Fasher. "But now these different SLA groups fighting each other have become the problem."

Fighting between the rebels reached its peak before the peace agreement was signed on May 5 by Sudan's government and the larger faction of the SLA, which was desperate to make territorial gains before the ceasefire. Hopes of an end to the rebels' mutual enmity, which has added another layer to an already muddled conflict, were dashed again on Monday when the SLA faction led by Abdel Wahid ignored an extended deadline to accept the Darfur peace agreement. A third, smaller, group, the Justice and Equality Movement, is also holding out. Mr Wahid is demanding more detailed provisions on compensation for the war's victims and disarmament of the Janjaweed militia. There are serious doubts as to whether the peace accord can hold. Negotiators have again extended the deadline for the rebel groups to join the agreement to May 31.

Recently the UN security council passed a resolution to speed up planning for a UN peacekeeping force in Darfur and threatened sanctions against anyone who opposed the May 5 accord. The African Union agreed to transfer authority for its 7,300 strong peacekeeping force to the UN by the end of September.

The latest twist in the Darfur crisis follows a major falling out late last year in the leadership of the SLA, a broad-based guerrilla movement formed to protest against the region's marginalisation by the Arab-dominated regime in Khartoum. Minni Arcua Minnawi, the group's secretary-general, took with him the larger share of the fighters and weapons. Most of his men are Zaghawa, a cattle-herding tribe. Mr Wahid, the SLA chairman, and a member of the sedentary Fur, Darfur's largest tribe, was left with a smaller force but a large support base.

"We thought we would meet up in Khartoum, as we still had the same objectives," said Commander "Tiger" Muhammad, from the Wahid faction, who arrived in the deserted village of Tina yesterday with several dozen of his fighters. Some of his men, a motley gang wearing turbans and leather amulets, took part in the 2003 attack on government forces in El Fasher that helped spark the Darfur conflict. Retribution came quickly to Tawilla, where the vast expanse of desert gives way to rocky foothills to the west, as government forces attacked African tribes. The SLA "liberated" the area more than a year ago, bringing a degree of stability. Civilians began returning to their fields to plant crops. Some even returned to their villages near the town. But since February this year Tawilla has become one of the most insecure regions of Darfur as rebels under Mr Minnawi sought to capture territory from their rival faction. Civilians were caught in the crossfire. The initial attack, at Korma, left 12 of Mr Wahid's fighters dead, along with numerous bystanders. Attacks on villages continued throughout the next two months. On April 19 the Minni rebels attacked the village of Tina, forcing all the inhabitants to Tawilla and looting their property.

"When you see the suffering around Tawilla, it is because of Minni," said Mr Muhammad, a thin man wearing military fatigues. "He has a secret agenda of wanting to create a big 'Zaghawaland' but we are fighting for all the people of Darfur."

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NEW ZEALAND FIRM MAKES BIO-DIESEL FROM SEWAGE IN WORLD FIRST

By Errol Kiong
From an article in the *New Zealand Herald*

A New Zealand company has successfully turned sewage into modern-day gold. Marlborough-based Aquaflow Bionomic yesterday announced it had produced its first sample of bio-diesel fuel from algae in sewage ponds. It is believed to be the world's first commercial production of bio-diesel from "wild" algae outside the laboratory—and the company expects to be producing at the rate of at least one million litres of the fuel each year.

To date, algae-derived fuel has only been tested under controlled conditions with specially grown algae crops, said spokesman Barrie Leay. Aquaflow's algae, however, were derived from excess pond discharge from the Marlborough District Council's sewage treatment works.

Algae take most chemicals out of sewage, but having too many of them taints the water and produces a foul smell. Creating fuel from the algae removes the problem while producing useful clean water, said Mr. Leay. The clean water can then be used for stock food, irrigation and, if treated properly, for human consumption. Mr. Leay said the process could also benefit dairy farmers and food processors as the algae also thrive in those industries' waste streams. And unlike some biofuel sources which require crops to be specially grown—using more land, fuel, chemicals and fertilizers—the algae already exist extensively. To get the fuel, the algae are processed into a pulp before lipid oils are extracted to be turned into bio-diesel.

US GOV'T COLLECTED MILLIONS OF PHONE RECORDS WITHOUT WARRANTS

By John Markoff
From an article in the *New York Times*

The former chief executive of Qwest, the nation's fourth-largest phone company, rebuffed government requests for the company's calling records after 9/11 because of "a disinclination on the part of the authorities to use any legal process," his lawyer said. The statement on behalf of the former Qwest executive, Joseph P. Nacchio, followed a report that the other big phone companies—AT&T, BellSouth and Verizon—had complied with an effort by the National Security Agency to build a vast database of calling records, without warrants, to increase its surveillance capabilities after the Sept. 11 attacks. Those companies insisted that they were vigilant about their customers' privacy, but did not directly address their cooperation with the government effort, which was reported by *USA Today*. Verizon said that it provided customer information to a government agency "only where authorized by law for appropriately defined and focused purposes," but that it could not comment on any relationship with a national security program that was "highly classified."

Legal experts said the companies faced the prospect of lawsuits seeking billions of dollars in damages over cooperation in the program, citing communications privacy legislation stretching back to the 1930s. A federal lawsuit was filed in Manhattan yesterday seeking as much as $50 billion in civil damages against Verizon on behalf of its subscribers.

For a second day, there was political fallout on Capitol Hill, where Senate Democrats intend to use next week's confirmation hearings for a new CIA director to press the Bush administration on its broad surveillance programs. As senior lawmakers in Washington vowed to examine the phone database operation and possibly issue subpoenas to the telephone companies, executives at some of the companies said they would comply with requests to appear on Capitol Hill but stopped short of describing how much would be disclosed, at least in public sessions. "If Congress asks us to appear, we will appear," said Selim Bingol, a spokesman at AT&T. "We will act within the laws and rules that apply."

Qwest was apparently alone among the four major telephone companies to have resisted the requests to cooperate with the government effort. A statement issued on behalf of Mr. Nacchio yesterday by his lawyer, Herbert J. Stern, said that after the government's first approach in the fall of 2001, "Mr. Nacchio made inquiry as to whether a warrant or other legal process had been secured in support of that request. When he learned that no such authority had been granted, and that there was a disinclination on the part of the authorities to use any legal process," Mr. Nacchio concluded that the requests violated federal privacy requirements "and issued instructions to refuse to comply." The statement said the requests continued until Mr. Nacchio left in June 2002. His departure came amid accusations of fraud at the company, and he now faces federal charges of insider trading.

The database reportedly assembled by the security agency from calling records has dozens of fields of information, including called and calling numbers and the duration of calls, but nothing related to the substance of the calls. But it could permit what intelligence analysts and commercial data miners refer to as "link analysis," a statistical technique for investigators to identify calling patterns in a seemingly impenetrable mountain of digital data.

The law governing the release of phone company data has been modified repeatedly to grapple with changing computer and communications technologies that have increasingly bedeviled law enforcement agencies. The laws include the Communications Act, first passed in 1934, and a variety of provisions of the Electronic Communications and Privacy Act, including the Stored Communications Act, passed in 1986. Wiretapping—actually listening to phone calls—has been tightly regulated by these laws. But in general, the laws have set a lower legal standard required by the government to obtain what has traditionally been called pen register or trap-and-trace information—calling records obtained when intelligence and police agencies attached a specialized device to subscribers' telephone lines. Those restrictions still hold, said a range of legal scholars, in the face of new computer databases with decades' worth of calling records. AT&T created such technology during the 1990s for use in fraud detection and has previously made such information available to law enforcement with proper warrants.

Orin Kerr, a former federal prosecutor and assistant professor at George Washington University, said his reading of the relevant statutes put the phone companies at risk for at least $1,000 per person whose records they disclosed without a court order. "This is not a happy day for the general counsels" of the phone companies, he said. "If you have a class action involving 10 million Americans, that's 10 million times $1,000—that's 10 billion." The New Jersey lawyers who filed the federal suit against Verizon in Manhattan yesterday, Bruce Afran and Carl Mayer, said they would consider filing suits against BellSouth and AT&T in other jurisdictions. "This is almost certainly the largest single intrusion into American civil liberties ever committed by any U.S. administration," Mr. Afran said. "Americans expect their phone records to be private. That's our bedrock governing principle of our phone system." In addition to damages, the suit seeks an injunction against the security agency to stop the collection of phone numbers.

Several legal experts cited ambiguities in the laws that may be used by the government and the phone companies to defend the National Security Agency program. "There's a loophole," said Mark Rasch, the former head of computer-crime investigations for the Justice Department and now the senior vice president of Solutionary, a computer security company. "Records of phones that have called each other without identifying information are not covered by any of these laws."

Civil liberties lawyers were quick to dispute that claim. "This is an incredible red herring," said Kevin Bankston, a lawyer for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a privacy rights group that has sued AT&T over its cooperation with the government, including access to calling records. "There is no legal process that contemplates getting entire databases of data." The group sued AT&T in late January, contending that the company was violating the law by giving the government access to its customer call record data and permitting the agency to tap its Internet network. The suit followed reports in the *New York Times* in December that telecommunications companies had cooperated with such government requests without warrants.

A number of industry executives pointed to the national climate in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks to explain why phone companies might have risked legal entanglement in cooperating with the requests for data without warrants. An AT&T spokesman said yesterday that the company had gotten some calls and email messages about the news reports, but characterized the volume as "not heavy" and said there were responses on both sides of the issue. Reaction around the country also appeared to be divided. Cathy Reed, 45, a wealth manager from Austin, Texas, who was visiting Boston, said she did not see a problem with the government's reviewing call logs. "I really don't think it matters," she said. "I bet every credit card company already has them." Others responded critically. Pat Randall, 63, a receptionist at an Atlanta high-rise, said, "Our phone conversations are just personal, and to me, the phone companies that cooperated, I think we should move our phone services to the company that did not cooperate."

While the telephone companies have both business contracts and regulatory issues before the federal government, executives in the industry yesterday dismissed the notion that they felt pressure to take part in any surveillance programs. The small group of executives with the security clearance necessary to deal with the government on such matters, they said, are separate from the regulatory and government contracting divisions of the companies.

OIL PRICE PRESSURE DRIVING GLOBAL SWITCH TO BIOFUELS

From an article on *www.ens-newswire.com*

Worldwide momentum is gathering for a major international switch from fossil fuels to renewable bioenergy, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said today. The move is driven in part by record high oil prices, as oil jumped to an all-time high above $75 a barrel last week. "The gradual move away from oil has begun. Over the next 15 to 20 years we may see biofuels providing a full 25 percent of the world's energy needs," Alexander Müller, the new assistant director-general for the FAO's Sustainable Development Department, said here. Factors pushing for such a momentous change in the world energy market include environmental constraints—increased global warming and the Kyoto Protocol's curbs on emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases—and a growing perception by governments of the risks of dependence on oil.

"Oil at more than 70 dollars a barrel makes bioenergy potentially more competitive," Müller said. "Also, in the last decade global environmental concerns and energy consumption patterns have built up pressure to introduce more renewable energy into national energy plans and to reduce reliance on fossil fuels." His view is shared by a growing number of investors, including Bill Gates, who recently decided to finance a U.S. ethanol company to the tune of $84 million. Other new entries in the field are a French company better known for making foie gras, and Hungary, which plans to turn one million hectares of farmland over to biofuel crops in the next few years.

FAO's interest in bioenergy stems from the positive impact that energy crops are expected to have on rural economies and from the opportunity offered countries to diversify their energy sources. "At the very least it could mean a new lease of life for commodities like sugar whose international prices have plummeted," noted Gustavo Best, FAO's senior energy coordinator. U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, who is in Doha for the 10th International Energy Forum, said that high oil prices are causing great pain to the U.S. and global economies. "Clearly these very high oil prices cause great dislocations around the world, they are very painful, they are very painful in every quarter of the world. That is certainly true of my country," he told a press conference. The three-day forum, which officially opened Sunday, has brought ministers and representatives of some 58 countries together in order to foster dialogue between producers and consumers.

What the rest of the world could do tomorrow, Brazil, the world's biggest producer of bioethanol, is doing now. A million Brazilian cars run on fuel made from sugar cane, and most new cars hitting the road there are powered by flex fuel engines. Introduced three years ago, they use either gasoline or bioethanol, or any mix of the two. According to senior motor industry executives, the flex engines are spreading faster than any previous innovation in the automobile sector. In Brazil, which started producing biofuel 30 years ago, a barrel of bioethanol is currently half the price of a barrel of oil. Some 1.5 million farmers are involved in growing sugar cane for fuel in Brazil. And "sun fuel" can be made from a variety of crops including soya, oil-palm, sugar beet, and rapeseed.

Europe lags behind Brazil in bioethanol production and consumption, and European prices are roughly twice Brazilian ones. But the EU has set itself the target of increasing the share of biofuels in transport to eight percent by 2015. However, if oil prices stay high, things could move even faster. According to studies by the European Union, biofuels grown on available cropland could substitute 13 percent of petroleum-based fuels in the short term. Diesel can be made from virtually any oil seed. "The world's first diesel engine actually ran on peanut oil," noted Best. Europe is already the world's largest producer of biodiesel from rapeseed, soya or sunflower seeds, and the sector is growing fast.

Various countries such as Germany, Ukraine and others, and many private and public companies are considering a big move into biodiesel from these crops and other sources. "The beauty of bioenergy is that production can be tailored to local environments and energy needs," Best said. "Where there's land, where there's farmers, where there's interest, bioenergy may be the best option. And if we add some sound analysis and good business models, we will get that option right." Farmers, particularly in tropical areas, are seeing new opportunities for increasing production and raising their incomes. "But we also need to be careful," Best warned. "We need to plan. Competition for land between food and energy production needs to be converted to positive common benefits."

One worry is that large-scale promotion of bioenergy relying on intensive cash-crop monocultures could see the sector dominated by a few agri-energy giants—without any real gains for small farmers. But to date no comprehensive attempt has been made to address the complex technical, policy and institutional problems involved, said Best. In order to fill this gap FAO has set up an International Bioenergy Platform (IBEP), to be officially presented at the United Nations in New York on May 9. The IBEP will provide expertise and advice for governments and private operators to formulate bioenergy policies and strategies. It will also help them develop the tools to quantify bioenergy resources and implications for sustainable development on a country-by-country basis. It will further assist in the formulation of national bioenergy programs, drawing on FAO's experience in promoting national, regional and global bioenergy development. "The aim is to help us grow both enough fuel and enough food," Müller said, "and make sure that everyone benefits in the process."

MEXICO, OTHER NATIONS CONDEMN U.S. BORDER FENCE PLAN

By Jason Lange
From an article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

Mexico and four Central American nations condemned the US plan to build hundreds of miles of triple-layered fencing on its southern border, saying it would not stop illegal immigration. In a joint news conference in Mexico City, the foreign ministers of Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Mexico said that building barriers was not the way to solve problems between neighboring nations. "The position of Mexico and the other countries is that walls will not make a difference in terms of the solution to the migration problem," said Mexican Foreign Secretary Luis Ernesto Derbez.

The U.S. Senate recently approved a proposal to build 370 miles of triple-layer fencing along parts of the 2,000-mile border separating the U.S. and Mexico. The Senate also agreed to give many illegal immigrants a shot at U.S. citizenship. Guatemalan Foreign Minister Jorge Briz said major immigration reform in the United States was the only way to stop the wave of people heading northward. "All of us are looking for a comprehensive migratory regulation so that millions of Latin Americans can continue working in and supporting the United States economy," Briz said. Mexico's Foreign Relations Department sent a note to the U.S. State Department outlining the nation's concerns about the proposed barrier. Honduran Foreign Minister Milton Jimenez said he expected several South American and Caribbean countries to join Mexico and the Central Americans in issuing a joint declaration on the matter soon.

In December, the US House approved a bill to build a fence about twice as long as the one approved by the Senate. The House plan sparked a wave of criticism from Latin American leaders, with Mexican President Vicente Fox comparing such a barrier to the Berlin Wall. Fox reiterated his criticisms on recently. "Building walls, constructing barriers on the border does not offer an efficient solution in a relationship of friends, neighbors and partners," Fox said in the border city of Tijuana. "We will go on defending the rights of our countrymen without rest or respite. With passion we will demand the full respect of their human rights."

On the border with Arizona, bedraggled migrants who had been turned back by the border patrol said that more fences would not keep them from crossing but only make smugglers charge more money for the trip. "I had to leave my three children, walk for three days in the desert, and now I'm here with more debts than ever," said Edith Martinez, a 40-year-old from Oaxaca who walked back over the border bridge to the Mexican town of Nogales. "Now I have to work in the United States to pay my debts from the trip."

WHICH IS THE REAL IRAQ?

By Patrick Cockburn
From an article in the *Independent*

Blair's view: "We have a government of national unity that crosses all boundaries. Iraqi people are able to write the next chapter of their history themselves"—Tony Blair on recent visit to Iraq

Another view: Two car bombs explode in Baghdad, killing nine. At least 23 more die in attacks elsewhere, bringing the death toll in May to 848 as sectarian violence spreads.

A frustrating aspect of writing about Iraq since the invasion is that the worse the situation becomes, the easier it is for Tony Blair or George Bush to pretend it is improving. That is because as Baghdad and Iraq, aside from the three Kurdish provinces, become the stalking ground for death squads and assassins, it is impossible to report the collapse of security without being killed doing so. There was a ghastly absurdity about Mr Blair's optimism as he stood beside the new Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone yesterday. As usual, Mr Blair arrived by helicopter. Anybody entering the zone on foot has to negotiate eight checkpoints defended by heavily armed troops and guards surrounded by sandbags, razor wire, sniffer dogs and X-ray machines. Mr Blair said the establishment of a national unity government meant there was no longer any justification for the insurgency. He announced that now at last the "Iraqi people [are] able to take charge of their own destiny and write the next chapter of Iraqi history themselves."

But Zalmay Khalilzad, the US ambassador, played a crucial role in getting rid of the last duly elected prime minister, Ibrahim al-Jaafari. His officials do not conceal that the envoy has been what *The New York Times* described as "a tireless midwife in the birthing of the new government." That is hardly the sign of a sovereign and independent Iraqi administration. Mr Blair said, "We have a government of national unity that crosses all boundaries." Unfortunately that is exactly what we do not have. The five months it has taken to form a government since the election for the Iraqi parliament on 15 December shows the depth of existing divisions. This government has a Minister of Tourism but, as yet, no Minister of the Interior or Defense, the two crucial jobs in a country torn apart by war.

In the two parliamentary elections and a referendum on the constitution in 2005, Iraqis voted along strictly sectarian or ethnic lines. The Shia and Sunni religious parties and the Kurdish coalition triumphed; secular and nationalist candidates performed dismally. The new constitution shifting power to Kurdish and Shia super-regions with control over new oil discoveries means that, in future, Iraq will be largely a geographical expression. So divided is the new government that each ministry becomes the fief of the party that holds it. The ministries are, in practice, patronage machines employing only party loyalists. They are milked for money, jobs and contracts. Ministers cannot be dismissed for incompetence or corruption, however gross, because it would lead to the deal between the parties and communities unraveling. (The government has become a sort of bureaucratic feudalism with each ministry presided over by an independent chieftain.)

Mr Blair claimed recently that one of the strengths of the new government was that it was "directly elected by the votes of millions of Iraqi people". But the US and British embassies in Baghdad have spent much of the past five months trying to foist figures such as the former prime minister Iyad Allawi into the government, despite the poor performance of his party at the polls. The problem for the US and Britain in Iraq is at one level quite simple. "If you have democracy in Iraq it will be in the interests of Iran, religious organizations and the Shia," said Sami Shoresh, a commentator on Iraqi affairs. All these things the US and Britain want to avoid, but it is proving impossible to do so. The Sunnis, the heart of the uprising against the occupation, are now waiting to see who will be appointed to run the Interior and Defense ministries. Terrified of Shia death squads run by the Interior Ministry, the militiamen of the Badr Organization or the Mehdi Army, the Sunnis are looking to greater protection from the US. But it is unlikely that their community, having fought the occupation for three years, will now support it.

One of the strengths of Mr Maliki's government should be that it includes Sunni members whose parties did well in the election in December. But the five million Sunni Arabs do not have a leadership as coherent as that of the Shia and the Kurds. The elected politicians cannot deliver the armed resistance. In any case, these parliamentary leaders of the Sunnis, only 20 per cent of the Iraqi population, know that the only reason the Americans take them seriously is because of the guerrilla war that has so far killed or wounded 20,000 US troops. The Shias, for their part, having used the invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein to gain power, have no intention of seeing it taken away from them by Mr Khalilzad or anybody else. The end of foreign military occupation will come when they decide it is no longer in their interests.

OMAR IS A DANGEROUS NAME IN IRAQ

By Jamie Tarabay
From an article on *www.npr.org*

As sectarian violence smolders in their country, Iraqis with names that are easily recognized as Sunni Arab are changing their names in the hope of avoiding violence. Some Shiites are also adopting neutral-sounding Arabic names as a means of escaping scrutiny. The fall of Saddam Hussein brought a rush of men—many of them named after Saddam or his sons—to government offices, applying to have their names changed. But now it's those with names that are clearly Shiite or clearly Sunni who are looking to have their names changed to something more neutral.

Handed down by tribal tradition, the names are an easy way to mark sectarian differences. Abu Showkat, a registry clerk at the Iraqi nationality and passports office, says some of the more common names are Omar, Abu Beker, Othman, Abdul Hussein, and Ali. The names come from men involved in the 7th century battle over who would succeed the Prophet Mohammed, a dispute that led to the schism between Sunnis and Shiites. The Shiites believe that Ali, Mohammed's cousin or son-in-law, was his rightful heir, whereas the Sunnis believe the successor should be appointed by a council. Abu Bakr was the first appointed caliph, or successor, and Omar was the second. So today, names like Omar are typically Sunni, while Ali is typically Shiite.

Men like Omar al Tikriti, who says the de-Baathification drive has made it difficult for him to find work, say they hear stories about groups of massacred men all having the same name. "Lately we've witnessed a phenomenon where everyone who bears the name of Omar is being killed," al Tikriti said. He cited a television report on 16 men, all named Omar, who had been killed. "My cousin works at the hospital in Medical City," al Tikriti said. "And he confirmed that the 16 were brought to the morgue in one day, and all of them were called Omar."

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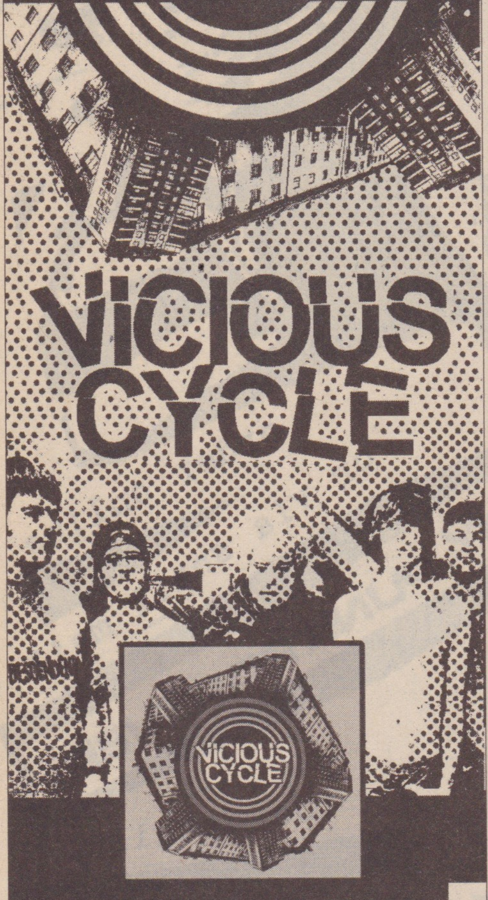

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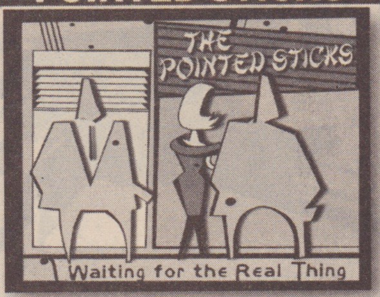

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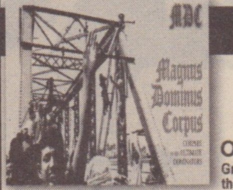

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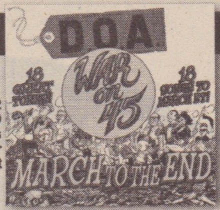

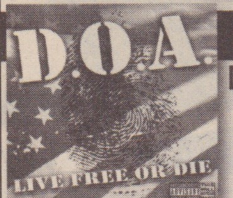

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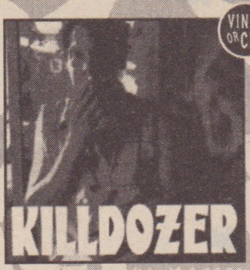

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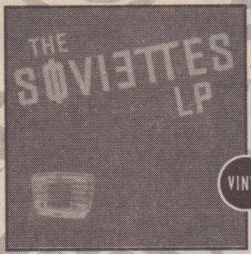

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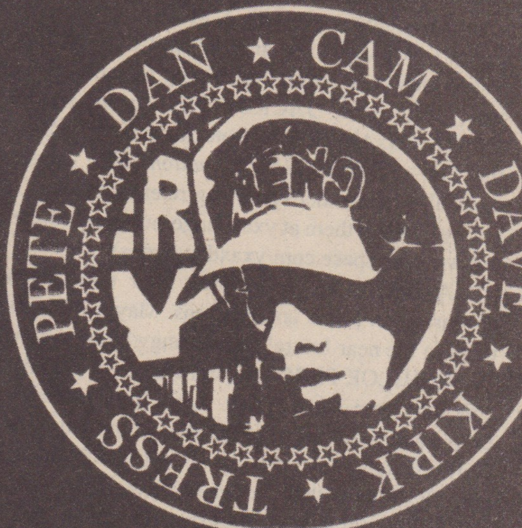

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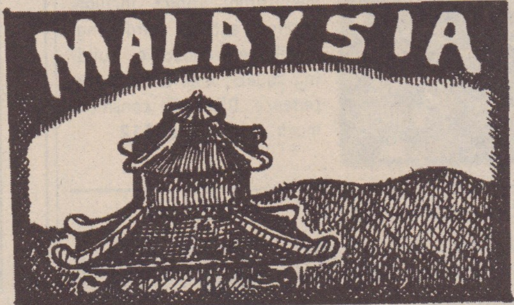
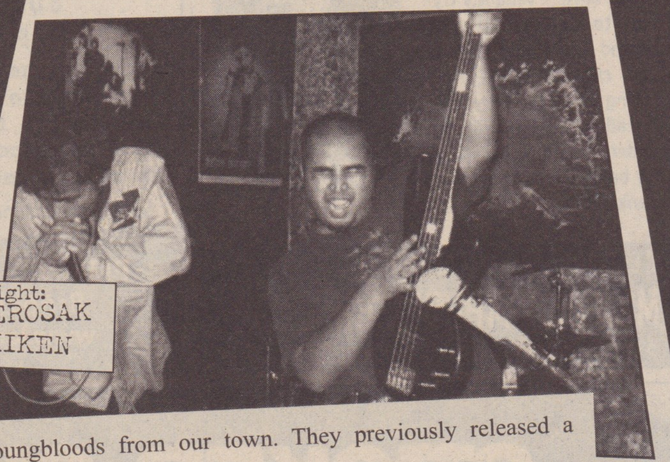




left to right:
MAHLOK PEROSAK
HAPPO HIKEN

Hello! We are xTimmyx and xAdx from Young And Dangerous/Youthrust Records. This is an updated scene report for Johor Bahru, which is the third largest city in Malaysia. It is located about 300 km from Kuala Lumpur and about 20 km from Singapore.

The hardcore scene in Johor Bahru began around 1994, but we are not here to talk about the history of the early days, because it is exactly that—history. This report is an update of what is currently happening in Johor Bahru.

BANDS:

PARKINSON started in early 1996 and is still active. We have heard that recently they started playing with a new guitarist. They have a ton of releases, and just released a new split CD with a band called RECONSTRUCT, as well as a three-way split CD with KERENANEKO and SELFMADEGOD. (broken_noise@yahoo.com or www.myspace.com/parkinson)

D(OLLIE)XPARTON is a new fast hardcore outfit and is inspired by raw-noise-thrash-fast music. They've already released two demo tapes and will soon release a split tape with a band called RICHARD DEAN ANDERSON from the United States. (email them at dolliexparton@yahoo.com or check out www.myspace.com/dolliexparton)

BRUCE LEE is a new skate-thrash and youthcrew outfit from Johor Bahru. They are a three-piece band without a bassist. They've released a split with another youth crew band called YOUNG AND DANGEROUS and they will be recording some new stuff for some upcoming releases. (xbrucexleex@yahoo.com.sg, www.myspace.com/thexlagend)

SHIT HAPPENS is a crazy thrash-HC outfit featuring some youngbloods from our town. They previously released a demo.

YOUNG AND DANGEROUS is a youth crew, fastcore, Japanese-inspired rock 'n' roll, thrash unit. They have released a split tape with a Michigan, US fastcore outfit called I ACCUSE! and another split EP with BRUCE LEE. These kids have several upcoming projects such as a three-way split with JACKSTONE (from Indonesia) and CAPTAINSxAMERICA (from Russia), as well as a track on the *V/A—SE A Thrash Detonation* (625 Thrash Records). They also have other upcoming releases planned, so keep an eye out. (email them at yxaxdangerous@yahoo.com or check out www.myspace.com/yxaxdangerous)

GAMPANG has been quiet after releasing a tape and appearing on a few compilations. Maybe we will hear from them in the near future! (xgampangy@yahoo.com.sg)

MAKHLOK PEROSAK is a crazy and long-running hardcore unit from Johor Bahru. Apart from releasing a tape EP, they have also been on a few compilations worldwide. Unfortunately, however, we've not heard much from them recently. (email them at makhlokxperosak@yahoo.com or check them out at www.myspace.com/makhlokxperosak)

HAPPO HIKEN is a screamo-grind band. They always change their lineup when they play gigs. They have no upcoming releases we know about! (check them out at www.myspace.com/happohiken)

SIX is another batch of new kids from the block that play grindcore. Their music is heavily influenced by PARKINSON and NAPALM DEATH! They also have no upcoming

releases planned.

ARGON has slowed the tempo even more after their tape EP and split CD with DAMOKIS! We have not heard from them in a while. Their music is now more similar to brutal grind!

DAMOKIS released a split CD with ARGON. This Pasir Gudang grind band still sounds very slow! No news on any upcoming projects as of right now, but maybe soon.

RECORD LABELS/DISTROS:

Broken Noise is undoubtedly the longest running DIY HC/punk label in the city. This label has almost 50 releases and has many more planned. There is tons of stuff in their distro as well. Stuff varies—they have tapes, CDs, T-shirts, records, zines, and almost everything else you ever think of. (broken_noise@yahoo.com or www.noise.ladingsatu.com)

YOUTHRUSTxRECORDS is a new label in the city inspired by fast/thrash-hardcore music. The releases on this label are mainly fast/thrash-HC on the tape format, some of which are re-presses of records from around the globe. They also distribute some worldwide hardcore stuff. (email youthrustrecords@yahoo.com or check out www.myspace.com/youthrustrecords/youthrex.ladingsatu.com)

3, 2, 1, Go! Records is another label inspired by fast/HC music, and has released several releases, ranging from Malaysian bands, to bands from around the globe. (distro_321go@yahoo.com)

End Up Records is yet another label from the city and is seriously influenced by fast stuff! This label is reputed to be one of the longest running labels in the city and still has plans to release stuff from around the world. They just released THE FA/EXTORTION split tape (enduprecords@yahoo.com)

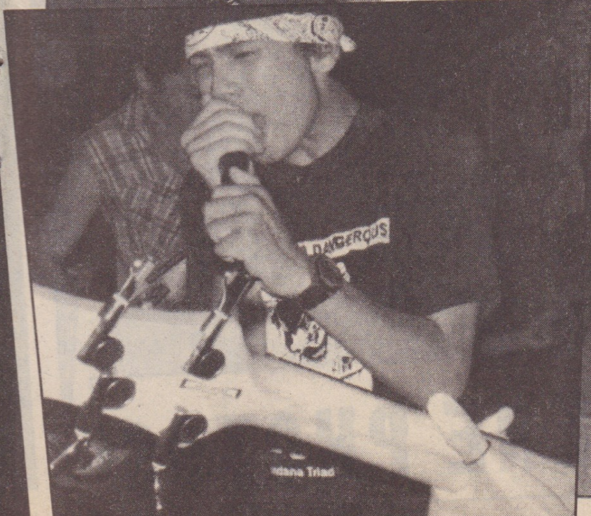
ZINES:

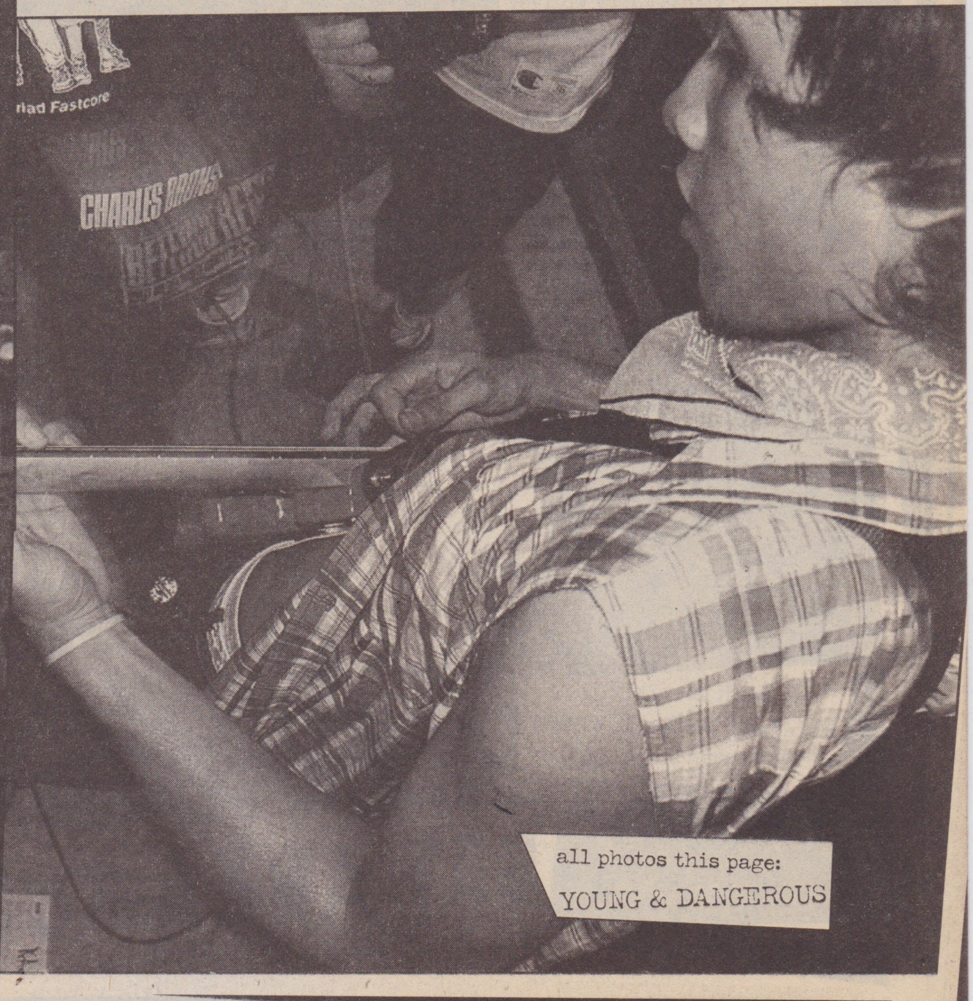
From 1998-2003 there were many zines on the domestic scene by HC kids, but sadly it seems that this practice has vanished. The number of active zines can be counted on one or two hands. Most of the zines in the city are written in the Malay language. Recently, some kids with aid from other HC/punk kids have taken the initiative to release a pro-printed zine. *My Friends And The Pit* is written in English and covers the Malaysian DIY scene. So if you are interested in SE Asian punks and the Malaysian scene specifically, you better check out this zine! They have released the third issue and the fourth will be out very soon! (myfriendszine@yahoo.com.my or check out www.zine.ladingsatu.com)

VENUES:

We do not have any permanent places for shows; most gigs are held at a jamming studio called Countach Studio. Many overseas bands have played there, including UNHOLY GRAVE (Japan), SOL, and VERGE ON REASON (Germany). Normally when there are shows here, circle-pits, moshing, and finger-pointing are necessities. Unfortunately, the place is temporary closed because there were problems with the authorities.

That's it for now, but expect more reports from the Malaysian scene soon. Up the punx





all photos this page:
YOUNG & DANGEROUS

ROTTEN FUX
@ burnt ramen - richmond, CA
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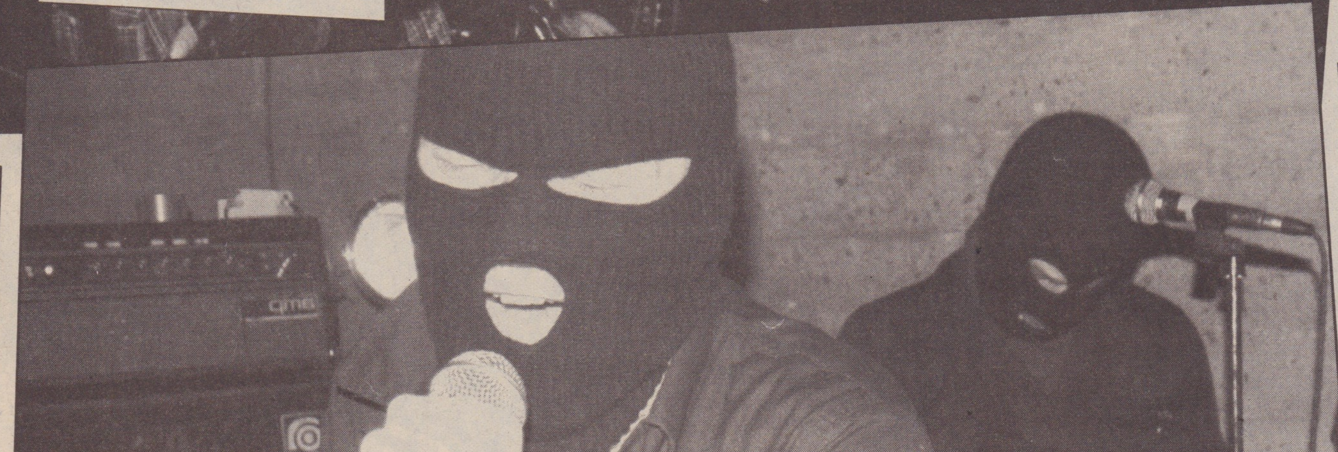

BAADER BRAINS
58 tehama warehouse - SF, CA
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BAY AREA SCENE PHOTOS

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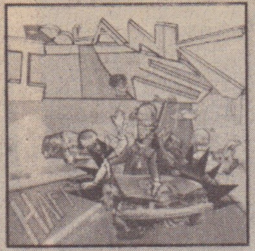
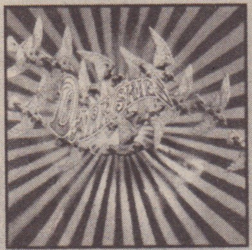


Blanks Its - Happy Accidents

"...Mangled two finger chords...and a high-strung backbeat... Think of them as if the Urinals at their most agitated writing songs they'd like to hear the Monkees cove..." - *Smashing Transistors*



Dark Skies - s/t

...stomp and twist their throttling, heavy soul stylings through channels of Groundhogs and the MC5 - but burgeon in the hydroponic northwest heat of Dead Moon and the Wipers.

Original Three - Dealt a Losin Hand

Lead by Ian of the Black lips the Original Three play down tempo garage punk. Recorded by Alicja Trout (Lost Sounds/MouseRocket) with a guest appearance by Jay Reatard (Reatards/Lost Sounds)

Tokyo Electron - s/t

This record is chock full of that blown out trash punk sound that Ryan (Reatards, Digital Leather) has perfected over the years. TE has quickly turned into one of his best and most sought out bands to date

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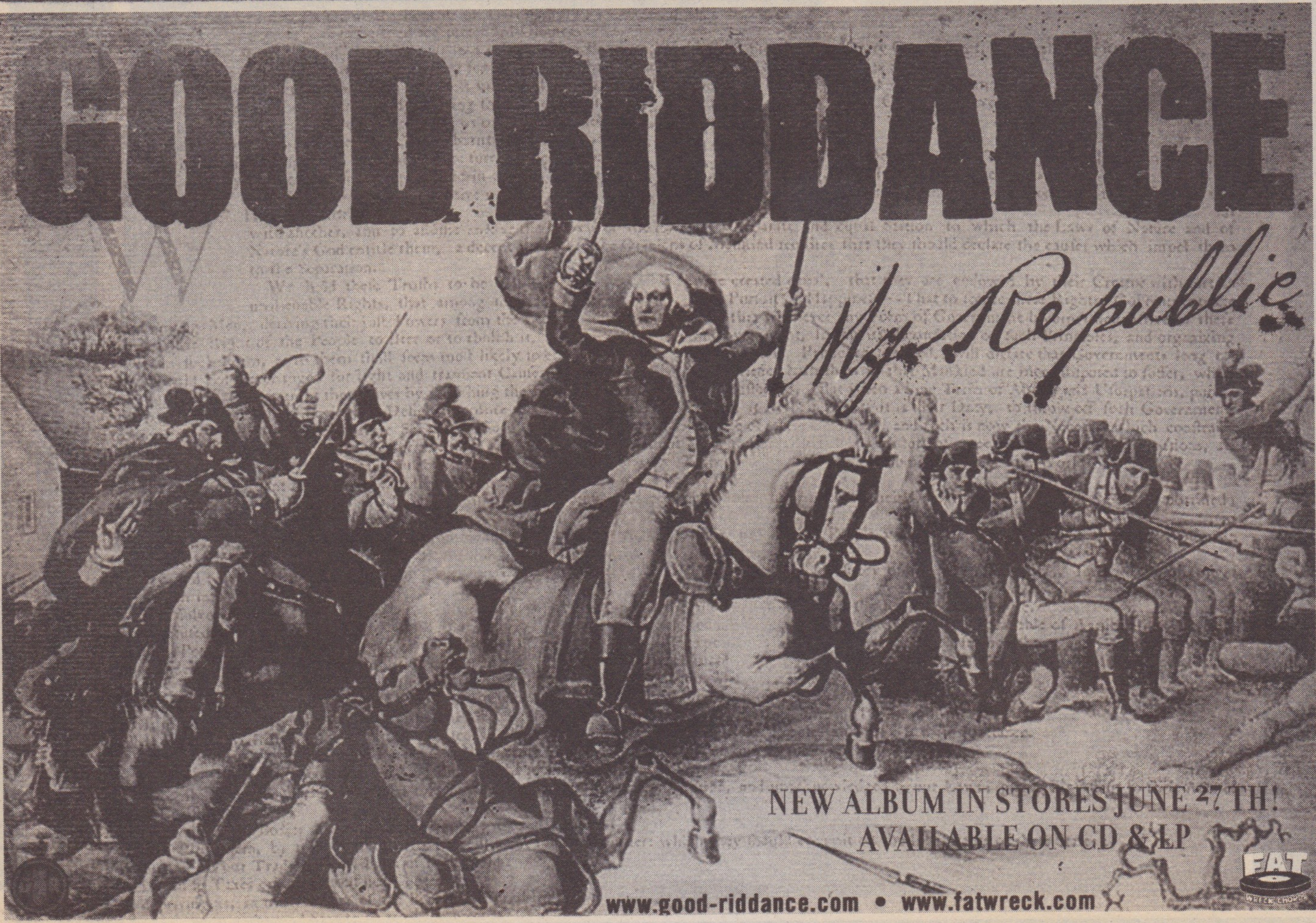

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JUN 24 CHICAGO
JUN 25 DETROIT
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JUN 28 CAMBRIDGE AT DEMOCRACY CENTER
JUN 30 BALTIMORE AT JERKSTORE
JUL 01 NYC AT C-SQUAT
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JUL 03 ASHEVILLE, NC
JUL 04 CHATTANOOGA, TN
JUL 05 MEMPHIS, TN
JUL 06 LITTLE ROCK AT DOWNTOWN MUSIC
JUL 07 MOORE, OK AT CHOP SHOP
JUL 08 LAWRENCE AT REPLAY LOUNGE
JUL 09 DENVER AT PANTHER COUNTRY
JUL 12 ALBUQUERQUE AT THE MOONLIGHT LOUNGE
JUL 13 PHOENIX AT THE PHIX
JUL 14 VENTURA AT SKATE WAREHOUSE
JUL 15 EAST LA WAREHOUSE
JUL 16 CORONA AT SHOWCASE THEATER
JUL 17 FRESNO AT LONNIE'S HOUSE
JUL 18 SACRAMENTO
JUL 19 CHICO
JUL 20 RICHMOND AT BURNT RAMEN
JUL 21 BERKELEY AT 924 GILMAN
JUL 22 PORTLAND AT LIBERTY HALL
JUL 23 OLYMPIA AT THE MANIUM
JUL 24 SEATTLE AT SS MARIE ANTIONETTE

AKIMBO

JUL 07 OAKLAND @ THE UPTOWN
JUL 12 SAN FRANCISCO, CA @ SLIM'S W/ SWORD
JUL 14 PORTLAND, OR @ DANTE'S W/ SWORD
JUL 15 SEATTLE, WA @ NEUMO'S W/ SWORD
JUL 20 CHICAGO @ SUBTERRANEAN W/ LORDS, SWEET COBRA
JUL 21 LANSING @ MAC'S BAR (CONFIRMED) W/ SWEET COBRA, LORDS, ELDERS, HUNDREDS
JUL 22 BUFFALO NY @ KITCHEN DISTRIBUTION (CONFIRMED)
JUL 24 WORCESTER, MA @ QVCC
JUL 25 BOSTON @ GREAT SCOTT (CONFIRMED)
JUL 26 CONNECTICUT @ THE HAMDEN ELK'S LODGE
JUL 27 PITTSBURGH @ GARFIELD ARTWORKS W/ DANAVA
JUL 28 INDIANAPOLIS @ DUDE FEST
JUL 29 ST. LOUIS @ KESWICK DEMOCRATIC CLUB
JUL 30 ALLEGAN, MI @ GROUNDSPHERE
JUL 31 CLEVELAND @ BEACHLAND BALLROOM W/ GENGHIS TRON
AUG 01 COLUMBUS @ BOURBON ST W/ GENGHIS TRON
AUG 02 TOLEDO @ VAMPS W/ GENGHIS TRON
AUG 03 CHICAGO @ BEAT KITCHEN W/ GENGHIS TRON
AUG 04 MOLINE, IL @ CARA'S KARATE STUDIO
AUG 05 MILWAUKEE @ SHOREWOOD LEGION HALL W/ GENGHIS TRON
AUG 06 MINNEAPOLIS @ TRIPLEROCK

I OBJECT

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MAY 26 BERLIN, GERMANY W/ A.N.S.
MAY 27 KOLOBRZEG, POLAND
MAY 28 GDANSK, POLAND
MAY 29 LODZ, POLAND
MAY 30 CZESTOCHOWA, POLAND
MAY 31 CZECH
JUN 01 CZECH
JUN 02 WIEN, AUSTRIA
JUN 03 BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
JUN 04 TIMISOARA, ROMANIA W/ PAVILIONUL 32
JUN 05 NOVI SAD, SERBIA
JUN 06 BEOGRAD, SERBIA
JUN 07 VULCAN CLUB AT SKOPJE, MACEDONIA W/ FXPXOX
JUN 08 KAVALA, GREECE
JUN 09 ATHENS, GREECE
JUN 10 THESSALONIKI, GREECE
JUN 11 BASEMENT SHOW AT SKOPJE, MACEDONIA
JUN 12 BANJA LUKA, BOSNIA
JUN 13 CROATIA
JUN 14 ZAGREB, CROATIA
JUN 15 LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA
JUN 16 VENEZIA, ITALY
JUN 17 ROMA, ITALY
JUN 18 BOLOGNA, ITALY
JUN 19 VALENZA OR MILANO ITALY
JUN 20 LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND
JUN 21 ZURICH, SWITZERLAND
JUN 22 SUNNY RED AT MUNCHEN, GERMANY W/ BONES BRIGADE
JUN 23 JUZE AT DENZLINGEN, GERMANY
JUN 24 JUZ AT MANNHEIM, GERMANY
JUN 25 FRANKFURT, GERMANY
JUN 26 GERMANY
JUN 27 ZORO AT LEIPZIG, GERMANY
JUN 28 GERMANY
JUN 29 FRANCE
JUN 30 LILLE, FRANCE
JUL 01 BRIGHTON, ENGLAND
JUL 02 ENGLAND
JUL 03 BOSTON, ENGLAND
JUL 04 FENTO AT LEEDS, ENGLAND
JUL 05 GLASGOW, SCOTLAND
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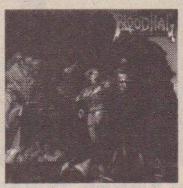

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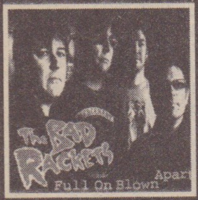

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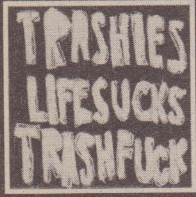

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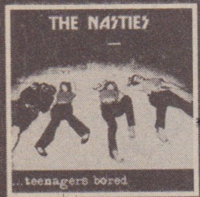

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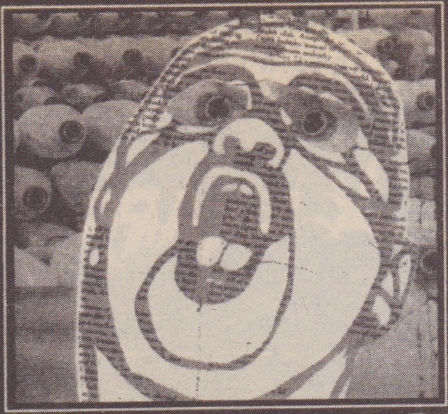

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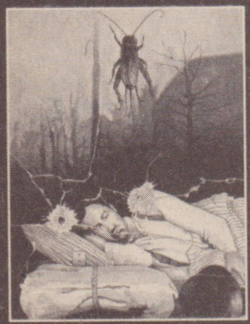

The Coma Recovery "Drown That Holy End In Wine" CD
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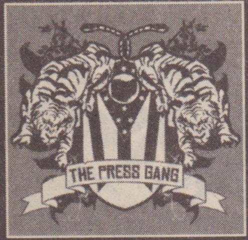

The Press Gang "The Press Gang EP" CD
FER-020 / Release Date: 03/21/2006
Hailing from the great punk rock metropolis of Bowling Green, OH, The Press Gang's latest EP is a menagerie of dance-punk, pop, hardcore, and probably some other stuff too. If you're into bands like Japanther, Thunderbirds Are Now!, etc. check this CD out. Only $7 ppd.

Vanishing Kids / Biography Of Ferns - split 7"
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Features one track from each band. Vanishing Kids (Madison, WI) contribute a track of beautiful shoegazey indie pop, similar to 'Head On The Door'-era Cure with lush female vocals. Biography Of Ferns (Seattle, WA) also have a very 80s indie rock sound, but more guitar driven, and recorded by the beyond-legendary Jack Endino. Limited edition on black, white, or green vinyl with silk-screened cover. $5 ppd.

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Billy Childish is often called a master of garage rock, even though he mostly refuses to acknowledge the existence of the genre. Various incarnations of his bands include the Pop Rivets, Thee Milkshakes, The Blackhands, Thee Mighty Caesars, Thee Headcoats, and his current band The Buff Medways. His music spans almost thirty years, yet it remains the same raw sound, unmolested by overproduction. Childish also writes novels, oodles of poetry, and he paints. He recently performed two solo blues shows in the Bay Area, reading some poetry as well. I've been following his music for over ten years so it was exciting to pin him and his moustache down for some questions when he was in town.

By Frog Gilmore

This interview is for *Maximum Rocknroll*; have you read it before?

No, I don't read music magazines. I used to read *NME* around 1977 and then I stopped. I've seen *Maximum* and I know they've done some reviews of us, but when I say I don't read them it's not out of any disrespect, it's just that I don't read any of them. Same as I don't listen to music really. It's all about your interests really and some people are interested in music. It just so happens that I'm not.

So, you don't buy records or listen to the radio at all? Do you follow any new music?

BC: Well, no. I stopped doing that in 1977.

...nothing? Not any non-rock music?

I've got some Indian Ragas, which I like. I don't collect it though. I've got like two or three tapes and I put them on because sometimes I get bored with it being totally quiet so I just have it on as low background music, but I only like music where people play things. I don't like new age music and I don't like pop much and I really don't like rock music. Generally I don't listen to anything. Maybe two or three times a year I'll get some old records out because I've got a record player and I'll play some songs for my wife or she'll play me some songs. Or I'll play some Jimmy Reed or some Leadbelly tracks. I have a lot of those records that I picked up secondhand in the early eighties, a lot of blues stuff that I liked. That's probably the last time I bought records or acquired them really, so it's not quite true that I stopped in '77. That's just when I stopped collecting anything contemporary. I don't go to records shops or search for anything older either, like I don't have the complete Bo Diddley or anything on CD, because I don't like things that aren't records. I like twelve or thirteen tracks. I don't like to be able to have the alternate versions because I think it makes it less.

So, how do you feel about technology?

I think technology is okay as long as it's not robbing life of its mystery. A lot of technology is very good when it's first instigated and then when it's marketed it goes downhill. That's why sound is so useless in pop music, because when recording technologies first come in, usually technologies achieve a high standard very quickly and then it's a matter of marketing and downscaling.

I think digital recording is one of the biggest cons perpetrated on music, as was the CD. My little record label Hangman went down because I refused to do CDs with the production and distribution people. I thought they were a rip-off and I only love records. Records just sound better. If you get a scratch on a vinyl record it will still play. If you get a scratch on a CD it's finished. CDs cost less to produce and sell for more. The artwork doesn't look nice and it doesn't have any atmosphere when it's being played, so I instinctively didn't like that type of thing. The amusing part is, of course, that the music industry completely destroyed itself by creating CDs when they only brought them in as a rip-off and it's bit back and ripped them off, so that's the only positive thing out of it.

Are you following world politics at all?

I don't listen to radios or watch television. I see stories on computers sometimes. But it doesn't matter what you avoid, the world comes into you anyway. You walk down the street and read the headline and there's probably not much more to the story than the headline. I know people get up to wars and I know the names of famous groups who play music because you walk into a place and you can't avoid the noise these days because everything today's got pop music in it. Even people who work in shops have to have noise all the time. I think people have just desensitized themselves because no one is actually listening. I think music is okay if you want to listen to it, but it's not worth having it as some sort of filter that stops communication.

You don't seem to mix politics in your music. What is your opinion on politics in music, like Billy Bragg or the Subhumans?

I've never heard of the Subhumans. I did know about punk rock at one time but I was never very political. When I was a punk rocker I didn't know what the anarchy symbol meant for the first three or four years. There was a truck company that used to have that sign in England and I thought it was something to do with them. I avoided Rock Against Racism and Right To Work marches and things because I wanted the right *not* to work and the Rock Against Racism thing seemed to be an excuse to go and try and have a punch up with some other bloody-minded people to me. I'm sure there are some people that had very good intentions, but I don't like crowds and I don't like groups so a political group wouldn't interest me very much.

As for the idea of anarchy I think we live in a state of anarchy so I wouldn't want to have more anarchy than we've already got. Corporate anarchy is what we've got. It's unregulated and it's anarchy. I think what we need is more regulation and not less. We need proper laws to curb people's egotistical

Photo on previous page by Jeremy Harris. Photo on this page by Lisa Connelly.

behavior. When we were in Thee Mighty Caesars there used to be this club in London that some anarchists had taken over and they asked to do a benefit so they could keep the squat running and when we turned up they had already smashed the toilets and smashed the lights. It seemed to be slightly counter-productive. Then we did the gig for them and most of the organizers were middle class girls who wanted to go and spit at Lady Diana. I said I didn't think it was very nice to go spit at somebody and as far as I was concerned I preferred Margaret Thatcher running things than them. That says something because Margaret Thatcher is one of my most hated politicians. I don't like any politicians but she's the one I hated most. I still preferred her to those people. Those people seemed to be into American Indians and I said to them "first thing you should know about the American Indians is that they had their own police force, and second they knew it better to shit downstream and not upstream." These things were clearly worked out. I mean the idea is to make life easier and not harder. I don't like these confrontational notions that people have about anarchy. The human being is primarily an angry chimpanzee. So the best thing for the angry chimpanzee is not to do exactly what it wants.

Social responsibility and organization are really great. The '60s were ruined by people experimenting with drugs and it ruined all the best things that came out of that post-war generation. Just listen to Jimi Hendrix when he starts and when he ends. Listen to music from 1966 and then listen to it in 1971. All those blues musicians were still going strong in '64. Link Wray was still good in '64. Music was still vibrant and exciting and had energy. The Beatles were ruined within a couple of years. Bob Dylan started out doing something reasonably interesting and then "expands his mind." You see, if you don't have restriction and discipline in your own life and the way you do things, then you have them imposed by the state, so the best thing is to have mild laws that keep things roughly running on track and don't try and disintegrate those laws and those boundaries because when you do that clears the way for the police state and that's what we've been doing. Like in America, with not giving in to terrorism by changing they way they do everything, changing the way they travel, the way they view the world. That is giving in to terrorism. If you've got people trying to piss you off and scare you, the way you don't give in is by not responding at all. You don't change the way you do anything.

You mentioned Native Americans. You do have quite a few Native American songs ("Crazy Horse," "Pocahontas," "Lakota Woman," etc.). Why did you choose to do those?

I'm not really sure. I think mainly from reading *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* when I was a young man, which I was really interested in. I read some creation stories about Trickster in my late teens (Trickster is a Native American mythical animal, important in learning lessons and the creation of their culture). I liked those stories because I had a lot of suspicion of literature. I liked these stories because it reminded me of Lewis Carroll and nursery rhymes and these sorts of things. It was the area of writing I was interested in because I didn't know how to use writing to talk about things that didn't feel phony. So I suppose I liked things that weren't really pretending to deal with deep issues but in some way did. And that just comes into music. Being a fan of Link Wray, Muddy Waters and Jimi Hendrix, I have a firm belief that American Indian influence in blues music is not recognized. It's never mentioned. I haven't made it up; I've just listened. If you listen to certain Muddy Waters tracks you can hear very strong American Indian influences in it. My wife is part American Indian and part Free Black. A lot of American Indians were categorized as black because they remained non-people. They used to get lumped together. I know Hendrix's mother was Cherokee and Link Wray had some in his background.

On the other lever, it's just cowboys and Indians and you can sort of take it to a mundane level.

Like "Cowboys are Square?"

Yeah, kid stuff as well. That's the other thing. When we talk about this stuff it all sounds so serious but I don't actually think about it in any of those terms, it's just stuff that I do. Then I'm asked about it and I have to work out an excuse.

This might sound like a stupid question, but do you feel your music as deeply as you play it?

Yeah, I think I try and find a general connection with the energy of what I'm doing whenever I'm doing it. I think it's available to anybody at any time; you just have to get out of the way. It's the same as making a painting; you just have to get out of the way. So, really you are feeling it but you are sort of not involved. It's a bit of a paradox I suppose. I think if you put a lot of effort into something or strive to get something to be a certain way, then you block any natural flow. So it's trying to get out of the way and letting it come. In some ways it makes it more yourself when actually it's less contrived.

What is your opinion on the state of punk music today?

I don't have one. I wasn't aware that there was any punk music. As for garage rock, I've never acknowledged that there is such a thing. The only decent garage rock music is rock 'n' roll music and it's not heading to the stadium. You can't do decent-sounding music in a stadium. You can try and you can maybe get away with it once or twice. It's like independent music: independent as in music that isn't run by corporations. I always considered myself to be playing independent music. When I was running my little label with Rough Trade and distributors in England, they were of the opinion that independent music was successful when it broke into the mainstream where as I was of the opinion that was when it was unsuccessful. See, I'm not going anywhere. I've got nowhere to go. The only way I can make some money is if people cover me and I get a bit of money. Then I can disappear into the outback. But I'm not heading anywhere on a career path. There isn't anywhere for me to go because there is nowhere I want to go. I mean the only way I want to go is if they didn't have black box rooms (tiny rooms with the walls painted black) and had nice back rooms at places and had a decent old PA system which is a vocal PA and a proper sound and didn't damp everything down. If people would stop trying to be cool and there wasn't this slavish devotion to teenagers—not young teenagers, I mean the 40, 50, and 60 year-old teenagers. I'd say President Bush and Tony Blair are examples of the teenage mentality at its weakest because it's best to stop being a teenager as soon as you can and not try and extend it into when you are a grandfather. That's another thing brought in by the baby boomers I think—the perpetual highs and perpetual teenage existence.

If all of the sudden you were wanted everywhere by the mainstream and being offered loads of money for public appearances, how would you handle it? You wouldn't really go on David Letterman, would you?

I can do anything. I don't know what David Letterman is, but if he doesn't mind me doing what I do, if I'm allowed to have my sound, then I can do it. I don't have a problem with something like that if it seems to be interesting. I don't think it's something I'd like to do every week though. It's very easy to have problems with pop stars; my favorite person to have a problem with would be David Bowie. You know, it's not much of a job being David Bowie; it's a bit like being a member of the Royal Family. Who would want to do it? Who would do it at all gracefully? To quote Atticus Finch, you've got to try getting into someone else's skin and walk around for a few days to feel what it's like. You have to realize that success is one of the hardest things to deal with. Failure is much more comfortable and easy-going as long as you are comfortable and easy-going with it. The reason I'm in the situation I'm in is because they haven't got what I want. I don't want to be on David Letterman's show. I could go on it, but it doesn't mean anything to me. Beck wanted to do stuff with me as well at one point. What happens is people don't realize I don't mind not doing it if it's not done the way I want.

So you are happy with the way things are going right now?

I'm always happy with things. If these institutions or people or corporations have what you want—be it money or a chance for bigger exposure—then they've got you. They don't have what I want. It's possible to even do advertising for corporates with music if you can work out how you would live with that and what that would mean. If a large corporation wanted to use some of my music or something it would be completely understandable that I would do it because I haven't got any money and maybe I'm greedy. As long as you are not selling your birthright for a mess of pottage…

Do you seem to have a lot of crossover fans that have followed you from your music into your writing and painting? Do you have some that specifically follow your painting and writing but not your music?

I don't really know many of the fans if that's what

they are, but I do meet people who don't know that I work in other areas. There are people who don't know I'm a musician. It was easier when I didn't use Childish and I used my family name for painting but it became impossible because people would not advertise the exhibition under my family name and it would always end up under this Childish name. I do get people who don't like the music but they like the art.

Do you have filthy rich people who collect your stuff?

There are some filthy rich people who have bought things but it's been very slow on that level. The art world is much smaller and meaner than the music industry. It's harder to exist within the art world like a cockroach unnoticed in the corner. Writing is the same because they are smaller worlds. The exterminator comes round and finds you easier in art and writing, whereas in music it's such a big house they don't go in some of the rooms so you can live happily and unnoticed.

I read a great interview you did with Charles Thomson where you were most Zen in the how you thought about your critics. Can you elaborate on that?

Your critics and your enemies are your friends I suppose, because they help to remind you that what you do isn't a big deal. I don't have people as enemies but some people have me as an enemy. But that's their business. I'm a big mouth and I say rude things about people sometimes. I'm quite happy to apologize if people are upset about it. My main problem is people don't like my views if I don't like what they do or question certain things about it—they get very upset. That has happened a lot with an old girlfriend of mine. I therefore go from someone who is adored to someone who is the enemy. I think it's because I'm considered a bad father. A lot of people live odd psychological lives and the people they admire are their property and if they don't get your approval they then want to have you killed (he chuckles). I don't bear any ill will on anyone and there's nothing anything anyone can say against me that I haven't thought worse of about myself. And I try not to bother doing that to myself. Their things don't really cut either. I don't care what anyone does or says as long as they don't hit me. A lot of people don't understand that it doesn't matter how many people you get to agree with you it doesn't make you right. Because the truth is the truth, no matter what you prefer it to be and it doesn't matter what lie you do, or what society agrees with you, or how many people you can get on your side; if it's not the truth then it's not the truth. That's how enemies can be your best friends and your best friends your worst enemies, because your friends will always go along with you. This is a problem that the affluent and the famous have to deal with. That's why I say it's a difficult path that one. No one was there to tell David Bowie that his haircut was daft and that he's not a scary alien.

Is it true there is interest in doing a film about your life?

No. Larry Clark wanted to do a film about a novel of mine. The novel is considered to be autobiographical. I think that most fiction is autobiographical and most autobiographies are extreme fiction. All it is, is people want to nail each other down as much as they can. Let's say my novel is subjective enough to make it complete fiction as far as I'm concerned. I would say that most people's lives are complete fiction.

Are you interested in doing it?

Well I'm not doing it. He'd have to do it. He's got to con someone into spending the money. I wrote a screenplay for him a couple of years ago, quite incompetently I think. He was very pleased with it. I don't hold my breath about people making a film. If someone wants to make a film that's all very well but you've got to get someone to pay for it, which is the trick. I think Larry has enough trouble getting money to make films even with his reputation. I got on very well with Larry and if he says, "I've got some people who want to do it," we'll talk again.

You have a son now. Has becoming a father changed you at all?

Yeah, very much so. It's just the simple thing of putting someone else in the picture. It helps you stop being an adolescent. I had stopped being an adolescent quite successfully, but it just confirms that a bit more because you've got responsibility and responsibility makes people more noble. It's about doing things for people other than just for yourself. It also gives you the chance to do things differently than what happened to you and it also puts you very much in touch with the aspects of yourself that are still baby-ish or child-like. You get the chance to examine that stuff in yourself.

You didn't have a proper role model for a father. Was he not in your life or was he in it in a negative way?

A bit of both. My father is still up to the same

Photo on left by Jerry Connolly. Photo on right by Lisa Connolly.

tricks even now. I'm the only member of the family who will talk to him.

Did you make amends with him?

I beat him up and I made peace with him.

So you are there for him now when no one else is?

Yes, but he chooses not to take me up on that at the moment. I presume the next time I see him I'll be burying him. He's an alcoholic manic-depressive. I've got a 14 year-old brother as well who's into music and wears hats and funny uniforms and plays guitar.

A very important thing about life is realizing that you can't control people or how they feel about you and that's okay. The whole thing is to make peace with as many people as you can. Life's a spiritual journey and the journey is to live and grow. If you don't engage in that then you are wasting your time. That's why drugs are a waste of time. It's not a moral question.

Life's very serious and a bit of a joke as well. Best to sort of get things straight and organized for the life that you are in. If you are in a shitty place the same thing counts and if it gets shitted up again that's okay as well and then you start again.

It's not a matter of having it all perfect; it's a matter of getting on with it. I get kids who come up to me about drinking and think they are in love with some idea of who they think I am, like Charles Bukowski or whatever. The gutter is a perfectly good place to start but it's not a particularly sensible place to live in. Start dealing with the situation so you don't have to pay penance. You don't have to become an alcoholic. You can skip all that.

You have been off alcohol for over ten years now?

Yeah. I stopped drinking in '93.

Was there one serious incident, like a lying-on-your-floor-in-your-own-vomit-kind of turning point to make you quit?

Yeah, it lasted about 15 years. I woke up every morning for 15 years and said "I can't do this anymore." After fifteen years even as someone as slow as myself can get into action.

What are your hopes and fears about your son Huddie growing up?

They are all personal things, because love and caring about people is about yourself really and what's comfortable. Naturally if you have fears and worries, they are all about death. I mean, on a mundane level I would prefer him to be at my funeral rather than me at his. I'd prefer it if there weren't jungles where unseen tigers live and the fabric of the planet wasn't being disintegrated at quite the rate it is but again that's ultimately a fear of your own mortality and a fear of change. Obviously you would like someone to have a rewarding life. You would like it to be an easy ride, but you don't know what people's lives are for. So let's just say I hope he has a good time here.

So you are living in the here-and-now and not worrying about things?

No. There's no point in doing that. The important thing with children is to not encourage them to worry. A good way to do that is to not worry. That's why they make such a big deal about faith in religion and stuff because faith is the absolute antithesis of worry and that's why faith is so valuable and useful because worry ruins people's lives.

Your current band the Buff Medways is named after a chicken. Tell me about the chicken.

It doesn't exist anymore, but it was made up of breeding Buff Orpington and Faverel and a Buff Coaching. We were going to try and re-breed it but it hasn't happened as yet.

Your dyslexia, rather than distracting readers, adds to the naked honesty of what you write. Has it been a problem for you or have you always rolled with it?

People made it my problem when I was at school but it never made me shy or bothered. I still wrote stories. The only unusual part of my nature is I'm not bothered. I mean I've got a shy nature in many areas but as far as creativity and that I'm not very shy. A couple of the novels have been spelled up but the new ones aren't.

Though, it's more effort keeping them dyslexic than having a standard way of having them so they can still be checked to see that your writing what's meant to be there.

Do you have an editor?

No, but I have people that try and proof things and it's harder with my dyslexia. I don't want words to sound like something I don't mean. I don't like standard spelling much because it's not necessary if you're not writing a text on heart surgery or space travel. It's not necessary for literature. Shakespeare or Chaucer didn't bother with standard spelling—not that I'm very familiar with their work at all. I know they didn't have standardized spellings. Defoe didn't have it and I know his work a little bit.

Do you read?

Yes, but I do think novels are intrinsically silly though. People make a big deal about them.

Why do you think that is?

Because they are written by angry chimps—human beings. I think they are pretty silly. I think most art and writing and music is basically silly, and that's the good stuff. The rest of it's not even silly.

What do you enjoy reading?

I don't mind half-decently written histories of things and I can read little novels now and then. I'm reading *The Prime of Miss Jean Brody*. I saw that this woman Muriel Spark died and I saw she'd written this thing called *The Prime of Miss Jean Brody*. It used to be a little series on television when I was a kid and I used to like the little bits of it and I'm reading that. It's the best voice of her generation and she wrote it in 1950 but it's pretty silly I thought.

I think people think that the novel—I mean if you consider the title of it really, "novel," what the form is, it basically shows how silly it is. People think it's a big deal if they read things, they think they are expanding their brains rather than just sort of passing the time. I mean I've had books that meant an awful lot to me, but you get ov er it.

What are you up to now?

Well, I'm finishing a novel (chuckle). A very silly one. I'm also recording an album with a friend of mine. He does sort of folky country music. We are recording it in the kitchen. He's Egyptian/Maltese and lives in the roughest street of Chatham and writes very sensitive country and folk songs.

You've always stayed in Chatham your whole life? Do you like small town life?

I just don't know any better. I don't mind a big city if I've got big money. A central palace would be all right, with plenty of grounds and machine gun nests, but it seems that to obtain those things you have to do a lot of somersaults, and I don't do somersaults.

I don't bother. You see, with the music and the writing I don't strive to do anything. I only do what's natural. Otherwise it becomes undignified and hard work. The basis of my work and my nature is taking the easy route—not in a Buddhist sense though, more a lazy sense.

Are you Buddhist?

No, I'm not. I am a big fan of the moral teachings of Christ and some of the techniques of Buddha.

You aren't a member of the Church of Scientology, are you?

No, but there's this English group called the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order and I am a member of The Friends of The Enemies of the Western Buddhist Order.

So, it's a piss-take?

No, we thought it was more Buddhist because we are friends with the enemies. My spiritual name is Itchy Scrotum. Wolf's name was Mighty Boulder. Kyra was a member; I'm not sure if she still is but her name was Toy Gun Grandma. My wife Julie is a member and she is Punk Rock Is Knock Knock. The people in the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (the real ones) don't have such good names. One guy we couldn't work out what his name was so we settled for Knickers On His Head. This was quite a long time ago though. I've got lots of good organizations I create. I've got one called the Band of Historical Hill Walkers; it's one of my new groups. We walk hills. I had a group in the '80s called the Conservative Union of Green Fascists and their motto was "war is nature;" it's called the Conservative Union of Green Fascists because everyone is invited to the war.

Here are some sites for more information about Billy Childish.

www.hangmanbooks.com/

www.theebillychildish.com/

www.damagedgoods.co.uk/billychildish/

DEATH TOKEN

MRR: Who are you and what's your part in Death Token?
Tue: Tue, 25 years old; I play guitar and sing.
Steffen: Steffen, 23; I play drums. Not here right now is Kasper from Hul and No Hope for the Kids, he plays bass.

MRR: What is your past in the Danish punk scene, and are you involved in anything else?
Tue: I started by playing drums in Snipers, back in 1998. After that, I joined Asbest, where I played guitar. When Asbest decided to call it quits, Steffen and I started jamming with what was to become Death Token.
Steffen: I don't have that many noteworthy bands to add. I used to play in a thrashcore band called Broken Hallux, and that was about it.
Tue: What about that other one?
Steffen: Don't feel like talking about that.
Tue: That was a pretty fast band as well.
Steffen: Fast? Ah, you mean Cystem, this miniature power-violence band I also used to play in; we only managed a demo.

MRR: Aren't you forgetting…
Steffen: Oh, and the *Fak Danmark* comp.

MRR: And the *Til Dine Ører Bløder* 7"!
Steffen: I've completely forgotten how much I did with that band.

MRR: You don't class yourself as a "fast" band, and some people would claim you play "crust." How would you describe your sound?
Tue: We play fast hardcore, but we don't play as fast as we used to. The first 7" might also have been closer to American hardcore. I wouldn't claim our new stuff is like that.
Steffen: I like the description "raw thrash" much better than crust, since it's not about bullet belts and dreadlocks anyway.
Tue: It's hardcore punk, nothing else. There's already too many terms.

MRR: What is your inspiration for Death Token?
Tue: In the beginning, I was very inspired by American hardcore, and besides that it has always been a lot of Japanese hardcore. Lately, a lot of European stuff sneaks in, but it changes all of the time.

"We might be able to talk about a third wave of K-Town hardcore now."

MRR: And the lyrics?
Steffen: Well, just the daily shit in our lives.
Tue: I second that.

MRR: Your layouts are quite interesting—do you try to say anything special with them?
Tue: It's mostly Steffen that does the covers.
Steffen: I did the inlay for the first one, and the cover we made together. I think we listened to a lot of Death in June at that time—it's pretty much a big reference to that, as they have a cover that is very similar to this. I don't know about the inlay. I used some pictures that worked well with each other. I think it was very traditional. It was a collage that worked above expectations and helped convey some form of the nihilism that was already portrayed in the lyrics.
Tue: It is a very dark record. Lyric-wise it's very pissed and...there's nothing positive to say.
Steffen: Nothing was happening in Copenhagen at the time, hence the name of the record (*Funeral Music for K-town Hardcore*). There was only one other hardcore band left at that time and that was Arrigt Antræk.
Tue: The music had died again.
Steffen: We might be able to talk about a third wave of hardcore now.

MRR: What kind of possibilities have you had with Death Token, which you might not have had with your previous bands?
Tue: It's the band I've experienced the most with. I have never come this far with the previous bands I've been in.
Steffen: Playing live and getting rid of some aggression. My other bands were rehearsal-room projects more than anything else.

MRR: Are you a politically conscious band?
Steffen: I knew it...

MRR: Sorry, but it's a part of punk.
Tue: There are politics in our lyrics, but it's not anything I think about. I wouldn't say we are apolitical; it just doesn't take up that much space.
Steffen: Sometimes you have to get your own shitty life working, a lot of people could take notice of that.
Tue: We are not a political band, per se, we are just a couple of angry young men.
Steffen: I don't think punk needs to be political at all.

MRR: The track "Don't Hesitate To Die" from the first 7" has a very aggressive attitude towards Scientology. What's the story?
Tue: Nothing much to say, other than I think it's bullshit, and that's what the song is about. I wrote it after they stopped me in the streets in front of their office in Copenhagen. The wanted

Death Token, from Copenhagen Denmark, is one of thebest bands currently going in Europe, combining raw and abrasive hardcore with darker, more moody sounds. Here they discuss the development of their sound, their continued involvement in hardcore punk, and the highs and lows of the K-town punk scene.
Interview by Martini "Yourkungfuisworthless" Lager.
(www.videodrome.dk)

me to take their "test." I wanted them to fuck off.

MRR: Retuning to an earlier point, "Funeral Music for K-town hardcore"—is hardcore dead in Copenhagen?
Steffen: It just died again.
Tue: It's actually dying again, it's not looking pretty at the moment. There are bands, but every time a new band starts—a good band—a year passes, and they don't exist anymore. People also tend to think there is really a large amount of people making music, but that's not really the case.
Steffen: We also have to distinguish between crust and hardcore.
Tue: There is a new wave of hardcore here that's crust-based.
Steffen: The crust scene is doing fine; it's never had it better than this. But the hardcore that we like is not doing well. We are the longest running hardcore band here, and we have been playing…what, three years?
Tue: Three years, tops. Bands don't have long life spans.

> **"We are not a political band, per se, we are just a couple of angry young men."**

MRR: What rocks/sucks about Copenhagen?
Steffen: I think there are a lot of good doom shows at the moment. Otherwise a lot of new people have been showing up.
Tue: A lot of new records and record companies.
Steffen: Yeah, more records. Funny, considering there are fewer bands around. Most stuff is by old bands, which is only getting released now.

MRR: On a larger scale, who is killing hardcore? And who is making it meaningful?
Steffen: I could probably mention one name in Denmark, but I had better not go there. I definitely think European hardcore is on its way up.
Tue: I think Finland has some really interesting bands. There are certain bands that I think are really good in Europe, and it's not been like that for some time.
Steffen: Germany as well.
Tue: Yeah, Germany seems to "get with it."
Steffen: The US seems to be running a bit in circles. Things seem to be better here in Europe.

MRR: What other music do you listen to, besides hardcore?
Steffen: At the moment I listen to a lot of doom and stoner rock. I'm a big fan of the early industrial scene, American and English: stuff like Minimal Man, Monte Cazazza, Throbbing Gristle and NON. But at the moment I'm into stoner and well…Zeke.
Tue: I'm also into old music. At the moment it's mostly kraut-rock, but I still listen mostly to hardcore, I'm especially crazy about Japanese hardcore.

MRR: You two run a record label—Spild af Vinyl—what are you using it for, and do you have any plans?
Tue: Release some good records.
Steffen: We started out of need. The first record we released was our own, and we did it because nobody else wanted to, and because we would have complete control ourselves.
Tue: We didn't have much time. We needed to go on tour, so we got something recorded as fast as we could to bring it along.
Steffen: We didn't really have any plan, it was just a nice way to release stuff we liked ourselves. Send us stuff. We just released a Gorilla Angreb 7".

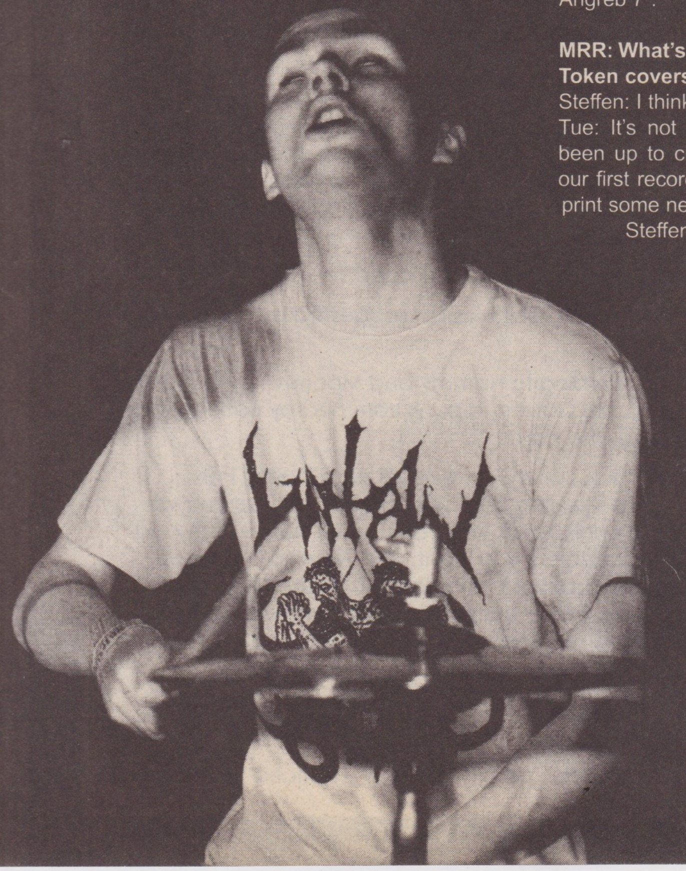
MRR: What's up with all the alternative Death Token covers, test presses and a box set?
Steffen: I think you are exaggerating.
Tue: It's not "eBay gold" we're going for. It's been up to circumstances really, for example, our first record getting sold out and needing to print some new ones.
Steffen: I think you are referring to the test press of the single. We were going on tour with Burial, and we hadn't managed to release the single, so we hoped to take a lot of test presses with us, but they got delayed as well. We didn't have anything with us.
Tue: Except balloons.
Steffen: Lots of balloons and flags. And two packets of our first 7", but they were sold in no time. Then the test presses showed up just before the K-town festival, so we sold them there.
Tue: We made different covers for them.
Steffen: Regarding the box set, it's a friend thing. Handmade, DIY, barbwire and sandpaper.
Tue: Very industrial. It's a present for Christmas.
Steffen: Which you have to buy for yourself. But again, for our friends.

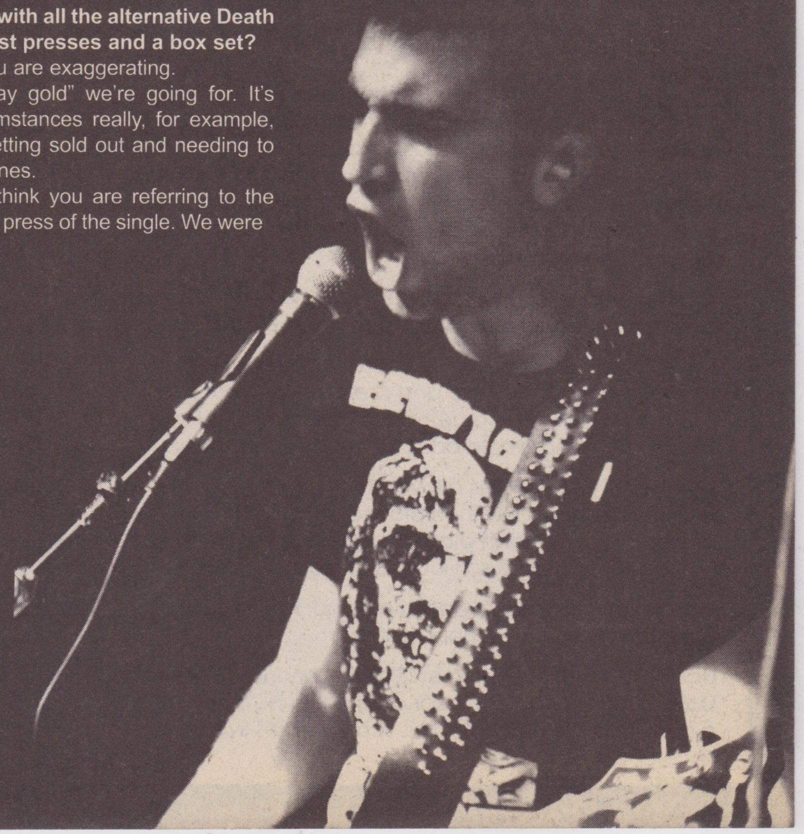
MRR: Three favorite 7"s?
Steffen: Leathernun *Slow Death*, I don't think I want to mention anything else.
Tue: Deathreat's self-titled; The Sexual *Last Days* flexi; Poison Idea *Pick your King*.

> **"The US seems to be running a bit in circles. Things seem to be better here in Europe."**

MRR: Anything left untouched?
Tue: I would like to mention that I make layouts. I've done stuff for Burial, Satanic Surfers, Intensity, and of course my own bands.
Steffen: And a heftily-debated US T-shirt.
Tue: We couldn't sell it because it was white.
Steffen: And someone apparently found sexual undertones in a nose that they for some reason made out to look like a penis. It's sold out now though.

www.spildafvinyl.dk





There is no god!
There is no god!

THE STORY OF THE

INSTIGATORS

BY LANCE HAHN

The Instigators were one of the most dynamic bands of the anarcho punk explosion. With a full-on energetic live show, they were one of the few bands of the era to completely translate that power onto vinyl as witnessed by their various releases on Bluurg.

Hailing from the Yorkshire town of Huddersfield, Hammy and Semi were school kids when they first found out about punk.

Hammy, drummer: "When the Sex Pistols 'happened' in 1976, the impact in the UK was enormous. I was only 11 at the time, but I can remember loving them and what they were doing. At 12 or 13 I was wearing punk badges and calling myself a 'punk' so I guess I was in the right place at roughly the right time."

Semi, vocals: "A difficult question, considering it was over 25 years ago. I was about 14 and was on my holidays. We went to the kids disco and in between Kool and the Gang and 'Summer Loving' (from the movie *Grease*) the dance floor cleared and this one guy started to dance around like a nutter to 'Friggin' in the Riggin.'' That started me off."

Making music had always been an amusement for Semi, who continued that simplicity through the band.

Semi: "We used to make drums out of old cake tins with cling film and sticky tape and pretend we were in a band. It was always something I wanted to do; I always liked to sing and would do so at every opportunity."

Hammy: "I guess it was a love of music; I took drum lessons at school and then played once for the school brass band. I couldn't play though and I suppose punk was easier to pull off so I looked to be in a punk band."

With no proper experience in a band, the Instigators were formed out of school friends.

Hammy: "I met the guitarist (Simon) Mooney when he started high school the year after I did (1978-ish). He was a punk into the Pistols and his schoolmates lived across the street from me so we started to be the 'school punks.' We then met another emerging punk at school called Semi (Simon Bridgewater) and we formed the band."

Semi: "Me, Hammy, Mooney, and Tab, the original Instigators, all went to school together. Mooney and Hammy instigated—excuse the pun—the band and asked me if I wanted to sing. I went down to Hammy's house in the school lunch break and auditioned to 'Army Life' by the Exploited. That was it, I was an Instigator!"

For the most part, they were all new to playing music in a group.

Hammy: "The first, it was like being in several bands though as we progressed and settled on our third bass player, Tab (Simon Elsey), we also had another guitarist, Rammy, for a while and two other vocalists, Daz Dean and Barbara Drye. So when we settled with the single/album line up it was the band for real."

Semi: "It was my first and last band."

The band name itself was first suggested by a local punk legend.

Semi: "According to Hammy and Mooney it was a guy called Ritchie Calvert, a punk from nearby Batley, who thought up the name."

Hammy: "A local, much revered punk called Perv went up to Mooney one day and said, 'I hear you've formed a punk band, you can use the name of my old band, Instigators, if you want.' We were so impressed and scared that we immediately agreed. Then when Crass' single came out proclaiming 'Shaved Women — Instigators' we knew we'd got a good name."

As that would indicate, the band was already well aware and influenced by Crass and other like-minded bands.

Hammy: "In Leeds, a city close by, I noticed that some

of the older punks had started wearing Nazi-style armbands with this strange symbol on them. I thought it had to be some skinhead band. Then I saw *Feeding of the 5000* and the cover scared me silly and when I read the text it was like hearing a new voice for the first time. Someone was communicating to me, a disillusioned young punk with no future. There was an address to write to and I sent letters off, each time getting a handwritten reply by a band member along with five or six badges and lots of flyers and literature. My life was set in stone from then on; I would be a Crass punk. At 16 I became vegetarian and tasted my last meat."

Semi: "I remembered a friend buying *The Feeding of the 5000*. To be honest I didn't like it. I like flowing music. I bought the Flux of Pink Indians' *Tube Disaster* and then the Subhumans' *Demolition War* EP. They influenced my vocal style and my outlook on life in general."

The group started out modestly like any good garage band paying their dues at ill-attended pub gigs. Eventually they were lucky enough to get on a major anarcho show.

Hammy: "The really early gigs were all in youth clubs, playing (badly) to the same twelve people who came to every show. They were mainly headline affairs; our first *real* show was supporting Flux of Pink Indians and The System in Huddersfield, two bands I absolutely adored. We weren't that good, but we went down amazingly well and were heroes to our mates."

Semi: "The first real gig we played was with the Flux of Pink Indians and The System in Huddersfield. It was over and done with in no time. I haven't really any recollection of it now apart from not liking our sound. On my 18th birthday we played in Wolverhampton with the Mob. They were the tightest musicians I had ever heard, apart from the Subhumans."

Still in their teens, they didn't necessarily feel part of the anarcho scene that their band was becoming entrenched in.

Hammy: "We weren't really, it was just that I'd write to all these Crass and Spiderleg label bands and we all communicated with each other, then we started playing gigs together and my lyrics would get more and more political. The rest of the band didn't really like Crass at all, so I always felt like the odd one out for being an anarcho type."

Semi: "I never really thought about it much. I was heavily into animal rights from listening to Flux and used to go on protest marches and the like with Hammy and a couple of members of Chumbawamba. I remember getting dragged out of Boots the chemist after protesting against the testing of cosmetics on animals."

Hammy: "At the time I felt like a small child who was being treated kindly by these big pop stars. It was odd to get calls from people whose records you were adoring and whose name you had painted on your jacket. I couldn't be a 'fan' anymore but we weren't old enough to be scene movers."

Semi: "There were some really bad bands around yet they gave 100% and that's all you can ask for."

With many groups following Crass in starting their own labels, bands like the Instigators found themselves in the rare position of being somewhat sought after, even in the underground. A friendship with the Subhumans would lead to their first recording.

Semi: "We supported them in Bradford. We were back stage after our set and Dick Subhuman came back and said in a West Country accent, 'That was facking brilliant' so we did the single (*The Blood Is On Your Hands*) and the album (*Nobody Listens Anymore*) soon after that."

Hammy: "Well, the Subhumans started on Spiderleg Records, Flux's label, and I had been to stay with Flux and we'd done some gigs with them and all got on well, so when Subhumans' record came out Flux asked us to support the Subhumans. I was sure we were getting close to being asked by Spiderleg ourselves, but after seeing us a few times supporting them, Dick and the boys loved us and I think we were amusing young lads, so they offered us a single. At the time I was almost disappointed to not get on Spiderleg as it was only once removed from Crass records and not twice, but after 'working' with the Subhumans and Dick in particular we soon had a great relationship and were truly overjoyed to be close to such a talented bunch of people."

Fish 6. *The Blood Is On Your Hands* EP was the third non-Subs record on Bluurg following the A-Heads and Naked. If it was possible to assign a "sound" to the anarcho labels, the Instigators' debut helped define Bluurg as more melodic and song-driven.

The five song EP was propelled by the amazing lead track, "The Church Says."

There is no god
Just society's lie
Another clever trick
To keep us all in line
The chance to go to heaven
Stops them fighting back
Never stop to care about

Looking at the facts

Semi: "Exciting, we went to stay with Bruce Subhuman in Shropshire and recorded it in a weekend. The Engineer made a balls of the tape so we re-recorded it at the Woodlands Studio in nearby Normanton, I think. If not it would have been Lion Studios in Leeds."

Hammy: "We recorded it twice, once in Warminster at the place the Subhumans or someone had used. We were exhausted from the travel, had little time, and hated the engineer. It came out sounding awful. Very luckily for us, Dick had the foresight and the balls to pay to record it again. This time we went back to where we'd recorded two tracks for the Pax compilation *Bollox to the Gonads*—Woodlands in Normanton—and this being closer and also a brand new studio it was great and we did an enormously improved job which ended up as the first single. We always went to Woodlands after that—great studio, great engineer."

The record was an indie success with the strong production matching the band's relentless energy. Unusual melodic and tenor vocals gave the record an accessible but unique sound.

Hammy: "It went straight into the top five UK indie charts. We opened up our music papers as usual and there we were in the chart. It was a surreal and amazing feeling. The response from everywhere was superb. It was a great time."

Semi: "Mixed feelings really, you always want to release your first single but it's a bit of an anti climax when it happens. It got to No 18 in the indie charts and stayed there for about five weeks. (Don't quote me on that though.)"

Not unlike label-head Subhumans, the Instigators took advantage of their live show and used performance as a means of getting the word out.

Semi: "Seemed to do at the time. We would play locally in the early days supporting bands like the Exploited, Toy Dolls and other mainstream punk bands. I worked full time in a foldaway bed factory and it was difficult at the time. Tab worked also as a joiner, Hammy had a paper round and Mooney had a job carrying a huge knob around with him. (Sorry Mooney, I had to get that in.)"

Hammy: "Yes, we played all the time, we had shows nearly every week of the year and the local clubs would always call us to support any band that was playing who didn't bring a support act with them, so we got to support some really diverse bands like the Adicts and Toy Dolls as well as our regular spots with Flux, Chumbawamba, Subhumans, Antisect and the like."

Soon after the release of the 7", the group was keen to record their first full-length.

Hammy: "No, by the time of the album we were loving being with the Subhumans and Bluurg, it was perfect. So we just set our sights on writing and recording the album and because we were rehearsing and playing live so much we were getting fit and slick on our instruments. We could play faster and had a grasp of basic songwriting. Even if I do say so myself, we were really good."

Semi: "We would have recorded it with the first label that asked. We were flattered by the fact Bluurg had asked and personally given the choice between them and EMI I would have gone for EMI."

The ten-song LP *Nobody Listens Anymore* starts with a short intro with an eerie child's voice followed by the band's greatest song, "The Blood Is On Your Hands." Though used as the title for their debut EP, the actual song was saved to lead off the LP.

Semi: "We recorded it at the Woodlands Studio in local Normanton. We liked the quality of the single so decided to record the album there. Dick and Bruce came up and did the engineering. They also sang on the backing vocals on 'The Fix.'"

Hammy: "At Woodlands again with Neil Ferguson and Dick/Bruce Human producing. We had more time, we recorded nearly everything in one take and as far as we were concerned it was perfect. I still think it was a perfect representation of exactly how we were right then and the production was everything we had hoped it could be."

During a period when much of the punk records, indie and otherwise, were often marred by inexperience in the studio and mediocre recordings, the Instigators are a great example of a group that got it right.

Semi: "I thought it was brilliant, the re-release by Blackfish records sounds much better than the original. The music is catchy and not over-complicated unlike some of the material that came out afterwards. I always wanted to sing first and foremost and I think that comes through on the album."

Hammy: "We fucking loved it, we were so proud and it also went down amazingly well. I think the high point was when we got the front cover of *Maximum Rocknroll* and a four-page spread with a glowing endorsement by Pushead. I thought we'd carry on forever and tour the world but it would soon be over."

But at their peak, the band fell apart. When things got more than serious, different personal interests came to the fore.

Semi: "Women, I didn't want to leave my girlfriend when we were planning a tour in Yugoslavia. I had a bust up with one of the other band members and that was it. I left there and then. Never to sing again! Well, only in the shower."

Hammy: "Well, I was preparing for this life in a band and the singer had a serious relationship, he said he was going to rehearse less and not tour abroad or something. I panicked and drunkenly abused him instead of talking to him. I had crossed a bridge too far, said something too much and he quit. We were as close as brothers for a long time and the extra pressure and strain that being relatively successful put on us quickly exposed the cracks that were there but we'd been able to iron out before. Once Semi had gone we all quickly felt that the band was finished and whichever way we moved on it would be different."

This original version of the group came to a complete halt in 1986, with guitarist Mooney picking up the pieces to reconstruct the band.

Hammy: "The first line up of me, Semi, Mooney and then Tab was the real us. After Semi had gone, Tab and me quickly decided that we'd blown it and the new band wasn't going to be for us and left within six months. So then you get essentially the second line up of Mooney, Tez, Trimble and Cuzzy."

Led by Andy "Tez" Turner, formerly of Xpozez, the group continued on through the '90s touring the world and releasing several more records, many of them live recordings.

With Semi in permanent retirement, Hammy was still interested in playing music. Within a couple of months, he joined an up and coming hardcore band called Civilized Society?

Hammy: "Well, I'd moved in with Dinger, the vocalist, and soon after I'd left the Instigators. A short while later they wanted me to join but they had a drummer, so they said I could always sing. So I did it. I'd nothing else to do and wanted to stay creative."

Making the switch from drummer to vocalist turned out to be a casual decision.

Hammy: "Necessity, the band knew that I was a good organizer and in touch with a lot of people. They also watched the Instigators in awe, really, and wondered if by having me on board they would get places a bit faster."

Civilized Society? was very much in the next generation with their music more brutal and their involvement more varied and often extreme.

Hammy: "In some ways some members were very extremely involved, up to the point of going to prison for four years. But other members were completely disinterested. As I was to find out, they were a very disjointed band who hadn't really had the same experience of closeness as I'd had with the Instigators."

Very different from the Instigators, it was clear from the start that the Civilized Society? approach would be more difficult.

Hammy: "They didn't really like each other up to a point. It wasn't natural and it was strained."

By the time Hammy had joined, the band had been together long enough to have written a lot of material. So in some ways it was an easy role to step into, a band already prepared to record.

Hammy: "They had done two demos but there was something like 23 songs between the two, so there was enough for an album."

The band would find a home for their first record on Manic Ears, who also boasted records by Concrete Sox, Chaos UK, and Extreme Noise Terror.

Hammy: "Well, Bluurg weren't interested, I don't think, they had carried on with the new Instigators and I think it was too close, either that or I didn't ask them. I knew Tim from Children of The Revolution records and he told me about Shane. Then we supported Amebix, Shane saw us and wanted to do an album."

The result was the brutal hardcore debut, *Scrap Metal*.

Hammy: "Because Venom did *Black Metal* and everyone was playing this metal or that metal. We thought we'd play *Scrap Metal*."

A dense record, it was only slightly influenced by the new wave of thrash happening in England with groups like Heresy and Concrete Sox. Much of the music was more influenced by groups like Antisect or Amebix.

Hammy: "We were pretty happy with the results, we went to Lion Studios in Leeds as it was cheaper than Woodlands and the sound wasn't as good but it was OK. We were more bothered about quantity than quality. The cover is OK, but it felt cheaper than the stuff I'd done with the Instigators so I wasn't overly proud with it. The response was OK, quite good actually, but I'd been spoilt before and it was a bit of a let down for me in the end."

The record would be one of the groups' few happy projects together.

Hammy: "Well, initially, we were all getting on, it was early days and we had fun making the first album. I'd sung for the first time and wasn't sure if it was good or not. But we did the record and were happy with it."

While not as busy as his days with the Instigators, Civilized Society? did a lot of gigs, often with Amebix, the Subhumans or Axegrinder.

All the while, Hammy had also been busy with his own tape label, Peaceville.

Hammy: "In 1981, the first release, *Flower 1*, was the Instigators demo tapes, on my new label—Peaceville! I ran a cassette label all through the years I was in the bands up until 1987 when we released our first vinyl."

Peaceville was quite a successful tape label not unlike Bluurg or 90 Tapes.

Hammy: "To sell some Instigators demos. Then I did a compilation of the bands I knew and was writing to and visiting, like Flux, Chumbawamba, and the Alternative. Both sold lots and lots of tapes and from day one I was a hell of a lot busier than I ever expected. It was a shock; I'd expected to sell maybe 100 in a year, not every week. I'd just stumbled on a career."

The name Peaceville was an extension of Hammy's pacifist values.

Hammy: "It means 'place of peace.' I'd hoped that we could be a peaceful harbour for bands, away

from the music business sharks."

This thinking would name Civilized Society?'s sophomore, and final LP, *Violence Sucks*.

Hammy: "It was the opposite of a parody! Conflict had come onto the scene and gone against the Crass anti-violence stance. We felt that to introduce violence to the scene was just stupid and it would all die out quickly if they did. So we publicly said we didn't agree with any violence, to re-affirm the Crass ideology. Strangely enough though, we received a letter from Conflict telling us that if we ever play London again, they would beat the living daylights out of us. Perversely it was signed 'Steve Ignorant,' who had just joined Conflict. To think that a Crass member could threaten to attack us for agreeing with Crass' message was bizarre. We played London, in Conflict's home area. I was terrified—I can't speak for the rest—we had baseball bats and talked about what we'd do the whole way down. They didn't turn up, but a bunch of thugs did, we thought they'd been sent by Conflict—nothing happened but it was a scary night. Having all been attacked for no reason by the bouncers and some skinheads after an Instigators show I knew only too well how bad things can get, in a very fast manner."

The tension that had always been in the band wound up being the driving point during the recording of *Violence Sucks*.

Hammy: "Strangely, I have very few memories of that record. I think the in-fighting had grown to such an extent that it overshadowed any memories that I'd care to keep."

The result was a record that very much felt like the end of the road.

Hammy: "Basically as we were growing up, the members became increasingly different in outlook and lifestyle—by the second album it was pretty much at the end of its natural life."

Soon after finishing this record, the band split in 1987.

INSTIGATORS

Hammy: "One member went to jail, then it became obvious that three members were rehearsing on their own. So we went our separate ways."

With the band split, Hammy would also go on to drum for Sore Throat/Saw Throat while the rest of Civilized Society? faded from view.

Hammy: "The three members never stopped playing. Apparently they do rock cover songs in bars. There was no love lost between us so I don't see them."

As for the former Instigators, when the second line-up quit, most found other fields of interest.

Hammy: "Mooney is a famous photographer who takes lots of shots for England's National Football team. Semi is a computer scientist in a hospital and Tab is a property surveyor. We mail each other at times, but we haven't really been together since we did an 'original line-up' reunion show in Leeds in '87, I think. Which was actually the best show we ever did. We all seemed to feel like we had a point to prove and did so. I remember being stunned that we were so good that night, but knew that if we'd done another show we'd be back to flogging some old horse and we put it to bed."

With everything water under the bridge, Semi and Hammy can both reflect with some fondness on their time playing punk rock.

Semi: "It was all over in a flash. I had almost five years in the band and they were good days. I think we did ourselves justice from a band who carried their kit around in a shopping trolley with a five watt practice amp and a bass guitar with one string. It took us months before we realized we needed to tune the guitars! We didn't do half bad, did we?"

Hammy: "Instigators=great band, great time—but of its time. Civilized Society?=confused! Sore Throat=wildly defiant, wickedly exciting and a great chance to learn where the boundaries are before later life (i.e. there are basically no boundaries other than the ones we create ourselves.)"

Semi: "I remember going to gigs and doing a quick sound check. We would then find an off-license and have a few quiet beers. We would then head back to gig, stopping off for Tab to have a poo in the middle of the road (don't ask!) We would get back to the venue in good time to do our set. We always made sure that we were all tuned up before getting on stage. It's much more professional than standing there tuning up on stage. It was always a great feeling when you stood in the audience ready to go on stage. It's one of those things you never forget."

And in their way, even without a direct line connecting them to any current anarcho scene, they are still just as connected to their initial ideals.

Hammy: "Well, it formed me and my ideas and I don't regret any of it, nor have I changed my views so it must have had some effect. It was quite naive, but then again I was young and naive so the two went hand in hand. I wish there were a Crass now, I'd still buy their records and worship them like some quasi-religion."

Semi: "When you have kids your priorities change. I would like them to grow up in a safe and pleasant world with no war, no starvation, poverty or violence. However, we still have all of these issues to deal with today and maybe that is why the ideals that we sang about still stand true. Maybe the time I spent singing in a band influenced some others to do the same and sing about the problems in the world, and maybe carry the torch forward for future generations."

Hammy: "They're life's fundamental points, which need to be heard in any generation. I dread to think what I might have been had there not been a Crass, Flux, Subhumans, etc."

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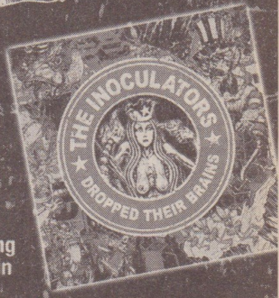

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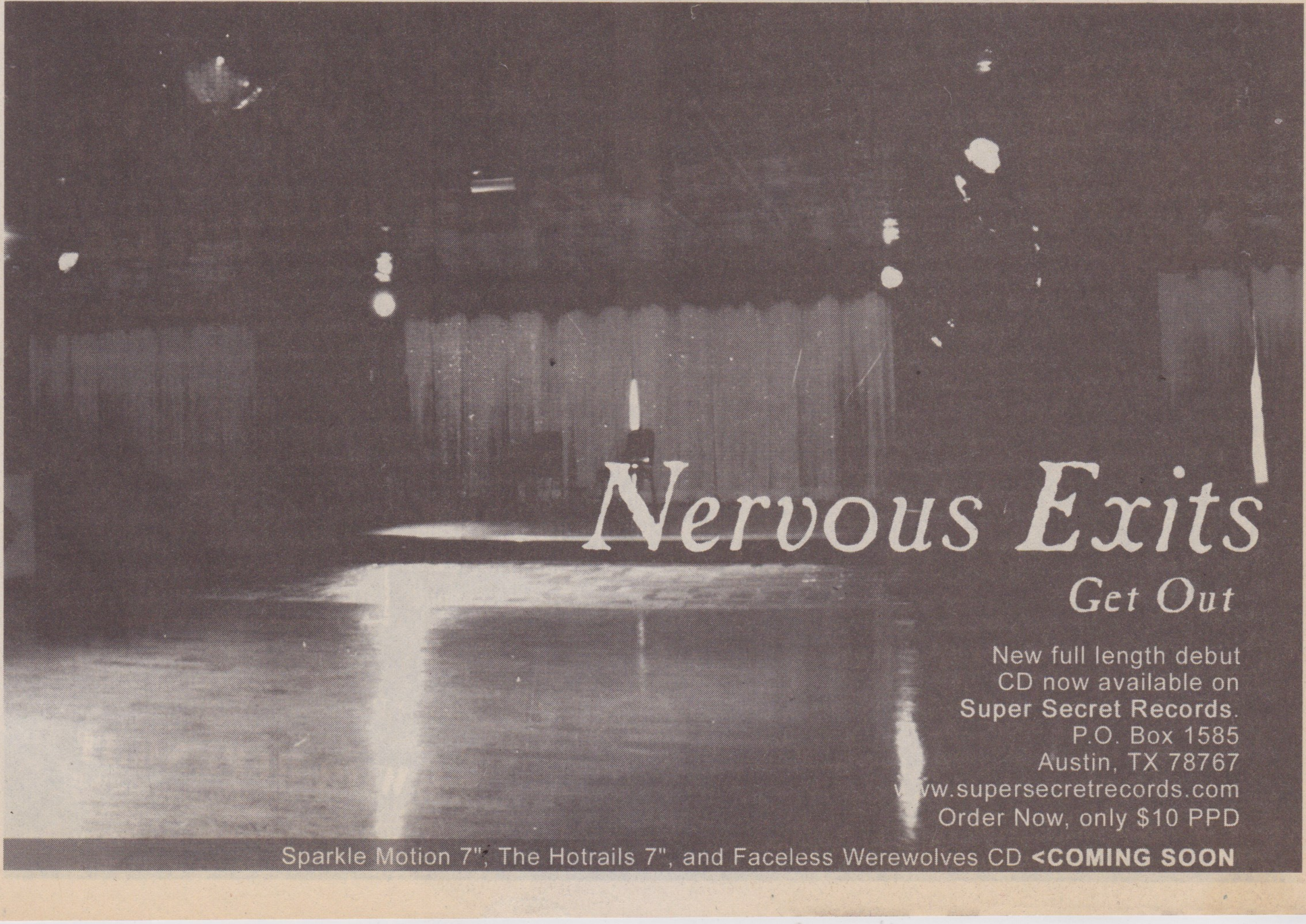

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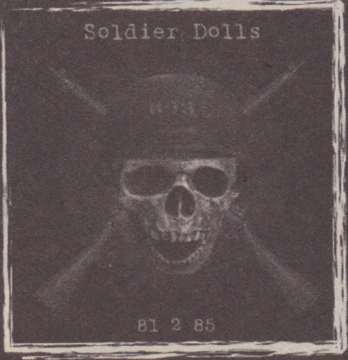

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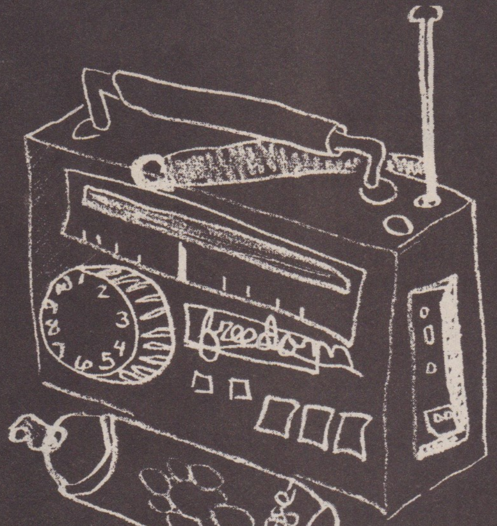

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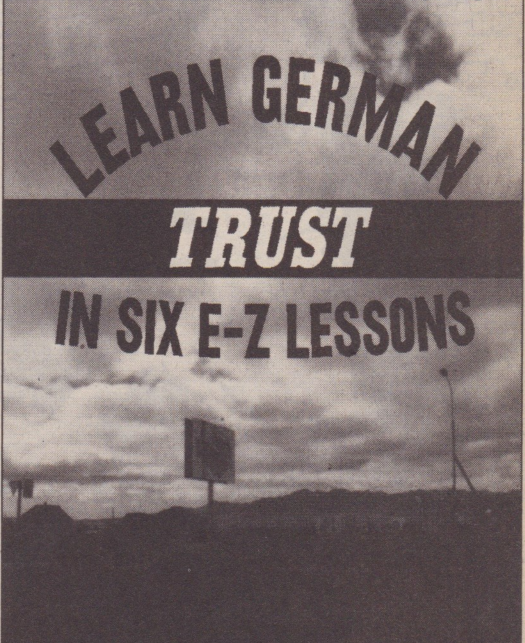

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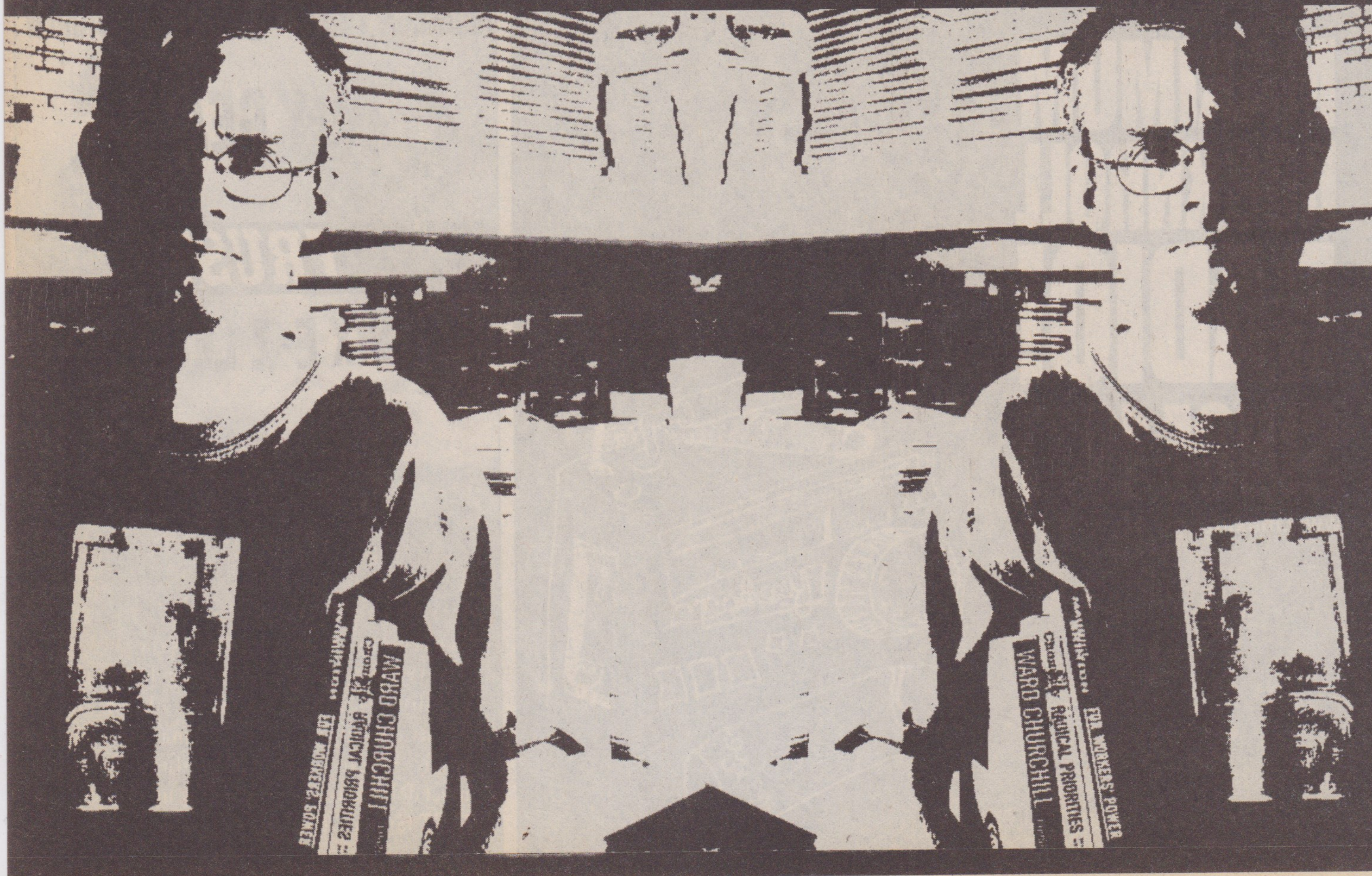
A CONVERSATION

ABOUT BUSINESS, ETHICS, AND THE MAJOR VS. INDIE DEBATE

WITH RAMSEY KANAAN OF AK PRESS

Amidst working on our "Is Business Killing Punk Rock" feature, it occurred to Paul and I that among our review staff was someone—Ramsey Kanaan—who had co-founded and dedicated the better part of his adult life to working for an independent, radical, worker-owned book publisher and distributor in the form of AK Press while helping shape the ethical core of that business. AK Press not only publishes some of the finest radical literature available these days, but also distributes a long list of books, DVDs, and fanzines—including Maximum Rocknroll—to an eager worldwide audience.

Initially, we sent Ramsey the same questionnaire that we sent out to tens of punk label and zines, but after a number of conversations and emails, Paul and Ramsey sat down at MRR HQ to discuss the inner workings of AK Press, the difficult work of making ethical decisions for an anti-authoritian business, and what it means for AK to contend—and sometimes compromise—with a capitalist system. Introduction by Golnar Nikpour. Interview by Paul Curran.



MRR: What is the core business ethic of AK Press?

R: The core business ethic of AK Press is anarchism. Both as the reason for the existence of AK Press—to publish, distribute, and disseminate anarchist, anti-authoritarian materials—and in terms of our business ethics, or the way we carry out those practices, especially internally: the way we organize ourself. Again, we attempt, as far as possible, to organize following those ethics. What that means for AK is that we're all paid the same, we have equal decision-making power within the collective, we have no management structure, and we have no owners.

MRR: How does that ethic extend to how you do business?

R: Well, then it becomes sort of a bloody mess. Our business goal is to destroy capitalism, or to help provide the tools to facilitate the destruction of capitalism and the self-emancipation of the workers of the world. To do that, we have to use our master's tools and methods to a greater or lesser extent. And we have to exist within our master's world and we have to pay our master rent and we have to pay PG&E, and we have to make all kinds of ethical compromises every day.

MRR: What are some examples?

R: I don't know if it's even a compromise in one sense; it's a reality... Let's use a hippie-dippy example: are we making a compromise to the temple that is one's body, by breathing polluted air? I'm not being facetious here. To exist in capitalism means that you have to do certain things: to exist in capitalism we have to pay rent—I wouldn't actually call that a compromise. To exist within capitalism as a viable business, such as *Maximum Rocknroll* or any other independent business, you have to pay taxes to the state and federal governments. Is that a compromise? I mean, sure, on one level. That's a feature of existence, like breathing polluted air or like wearing underpants that are probably made in China.

Ethically, practically, and politically, I believe in people controlling all aspects of their own lives. Getting to that place, anarchism, utopia—call it what you like—entails all kinds of compromises. I drive a motorized vehicle. There are many, many aspects of my personal life, my business life, my political life that I don't have control over. That's different from saying I want to fight to *get* control over that. But things that I'm powerless about currently, I don't view as a compromise. Paying taxes isn't a compromise; it comes with the territory.

We deliberately make certain decisions, which I'm sure we'll talk about later as well. For example, it is a political decision not to carry, as a distributor, books which are published by the major labels. By major labels I mean the same conglomerates, Time Warner, Sony, BMG, Rupert Murdoch, etc., who actually own not just record labels but all aspects of media. As well as being a publisher, AK acts as the distributor for several hundred individuals and small independent presses. We have made a deliberate decision, so far, though often revisited, not to carry books that are published by major labels.

Major labels have published hundreds of thousands over the years, and currently have in print thousands of great books which are of as much worth or importance as anything. For example, Howard Zinn's most famous book, and certainly his most influential, most revolutionary book, in terms of changing the hearts and minds of several generations, is *A People's History of the United States*. That was published by Harper Collins, which is owned by Rupert Murdoch. We have made a political decision not to carry *A People's History of the United States*, despite its political worth.

The reason we have decided not to carry *A People's History of the United States* is obviously not about the political merit of the book itself. It's actually a practical-slash-political decision. In practical terms, AK never has enough money to pay all our bills. We're always juggling every week, every month with whom to pay, because we are always owed lots of money, and we owe lots of people money. The book trade is all on credit, so we never have enough money in any particular week. Every week we sit down at one of our collective meetings and decide: we have this money in the bank, we have this amount of people screaming at us who want to be paid, who need to be paid and, ethically, we'd like to pay. The primary reason that we don't deal with the big bastards, is because the big bastards are the most efficient at collecting money. So de facto, in the business sense, they will be paid first because they have the accounts departments who will call us every day, which is annoying. Also, if we don't pay them they will threaten to take legal action to put us into collections. So they will get paid before our comrades or the part-time publishers who don't have the energy, the effort, the legal or literary clout to harass us to get paid. That's a reality of doing business where you don't have much money. So, as I say, the reason for not dealing with the big bastards isn't necessarily, isn't at all, because they don't publish great books.

MRR: The reason MRR has our policy about not taking ads from major labels, or even labels that use major label distribution, is that we think the most important thing is to act according to how we think things ought to be [i.e., breaking music and publishing free from major-labels]...

R: And I agree with what you do. Choosing to not deal with major labels or their affiliates is your standard of ethics, which has been hotly debated in the pages of *MRR* over the years. But you're equally willing to deal with those same people in terms of selling *MRR*. I'm not saying that as a "ha ha, proved that you're hypocritical bastards." I actually think that by that yardstick AK does the same. We have chosen similar ethics in the sense that we don't take advertising from anyone. Our catalogue has no advertising, our website has no advertising. The way that AK is organized, the way decisions are made free of that corporate sway, are similar, or comparable.

But in terms of the dissemination of the products—that untainted product that we put out there, we are selling to the same people. We're just not taking their advertising money, the same way that *Maximum* isn't. In terms of the dissemination of the end result, though, we use exactly the same outlets, and we're willing to make those kinds of compromises to do that. 'Cause as I say, it could be argued that *Maximum* shouldn't be sold at Borders, Best Buy, Virgin, Tower—these are the people that killed independent stores. So you're taking the money from the end result, you're just not taking the money to produce the magazine.

This is something we struggle with all the time. And I don't have an easy answer to that. The creation of independent culture, self-managed culture, self-produced cul-

ture, which comes up all the same against that reality of capital, big business, money—that's always the tension, and the reality of existence, and to me, that's also the interesting—not to say vital—challenge. Not just the philosophy of it, which, if you like, could be the ethics of that, but the practice and the reality.

What interested me about punk is the politics. Both the politics of the self-management of punk—the DIY—and the values that punk is meant not only to eschew but radically promote. Am I interested in a band that is a DIY band on a DIY label, that sings songs about snorting coke and banging chicks? I'm not interested in that. It's not just the politics of DIY itself, I'm also interested in the bigger picture, the politics, or certain ethics, such as "sexism is bad," not "sexism is bad unless it's actively promoted by your favorite DIY band, in which case it's kinda cool, or OK, or acceptable."

Again, I don't mean to be puritanical or laying down the law. I'm just saying my interests in DIY and self-management is not just in the act of creation or the act of self-management. My interest is in the bigger picture. If a DIY, self-managed band promoting sexism is actually denying self-management or control to 51% of the population…you see what I'm saying? You know, me waving my arms in the air in a circular motion is not going to change it at all. To me that's why there's that bigger pictures, and there's those tensions and contradictions going on.

MRR: I dunno, I think that a band that's full of shit but is independent and DIY… is *at least* independent and DIY because it would otherwise be a band that's full of shit that's being shoved down your throat by some big corporation.

R: That's a different argument. Who's better then, the sexist homophobic band who's 100% DIY and always will be and who loves DIY and extols it, and actually when they're not talking about banging chicks and hating fags, they're talking about the importance of being independent and doing it yourself. Are they more important than, let's say, Chumbawamba, who are actively extolling anti-sexist, queer-positive, etc., on a major label. Who is creating better or worse? Is it a matter of scale? Or does the platform totally negate the message? Or is the platform much more important than the message? There are many successful independents. It may even be incredibly true that some independent records have outsold major labels…What if the sexist DIY band sells 100,000 records, which is considerably more than 95% of bands on major labels?

MRR: So does it make difference whether a band signs to a major or not?

R: Practically, these days, there is no reason to be on a major label because one can sell as many records on an independent label. Bands on Fat Wreck Chords and Epitaph have proven that independent labels can sell as many records as a major, and be successful. So, in a purely pragmatic business sense, there is no reason to sign to a major label. There are independents that are capable of shifting as many units as a major label. However, to do so typically means, whether you're major or indie, to shift X amounts of units, means that one is playing corporate games, which, the argument goes, completely dilutes your message. You're forced to make so many compromises with the powers that be, whether it's appearing on late night talk shows, creating videos, which you hope will be taken into heavy rotation, or whether it's the necessary servicing payroll with radio stations to get into heavy rotation, the kinds of things one must do to play the game. Obviously, independent labels are able to do that, including ones that are within MRR's criteria of "acceptable behavior." They are able to do that and sell X amount. On that level, is there any excuse to sign to major labels? There's no reason, because independents have already proven they can do what a major label can.

MRR: Do you really think it's diluting your message if you're on, say, a talk show?

R: I don't know. The dichotomy, and the contraction of existing within the capitalist system is creating a genuine alternative to that. Is KPFA or the Pacific[A] Radio Network, a genuine alternative to Clear Channel? Yes and no.

MRR: Why no?

R: No because there's only five of them and they only reach X thousand listeners whereas Clear Channel has X thousand *stations* and reach X *million* listeners. Presumably the answer is to create more KPFA Pacifica stations. How do they begin without taking any corporate advertising? In the meantime, if there are only five stations in the Pacifica network, how do we get across to the vast majority of people in the States? We don't have access. Again, typically there's the contradiction. How do we get those ideas across; plant the seeds, fuel the debate; inform; empower folks—whether it's the DIY ideal, or anarchism, or both in the case, of AK in a sense: ideas of self-management, in all aspects of our lives, whether in entertainment or anything else. You have to get those ideas across. Those ideas don't come from nowhere.

Most kids who get into punk got into punk because of corporate/major label triggers, whether that's listening to the Ramones or the Clash, or listening to heavy metal and getting into the Misfits because Metallica wore Misfits T-shirts, or whether it was because Rage Against the Machine wore Los Crudos T-shirts. People have to discover it…there has to be an in somewhere.

Most people are not lucky enough to live in a place that has a cool radio station. Most people don't live in college towns. Most people are not lucky enough to live in a place that has an independent bookstore, or an independent record store. If politically, ethically, any other way, one is concerned with reaching the vast majority of people who are not so luckily endowed with these resources, how do you do that? To me that's the most pressing and vital question. And that's why AK will sell to Borders: because there's a Borders in every town. There is not an independent store. Even though, as I said before, I'm very aware that Borders are the ones who are cutting the throat of publishing. By that same logic, I think what Rage Against the Machine and Chumbawamba did was really good. We should be saying that it's a pity more major label bands don't do what they did, instead of, "What a bunch of fucking wankers they are, they sold out, they're corporate whores."

I'm a firm believer in encouraging people to do what they can rather than attacking them for what they don't. Is it a tragedy to the DIY scene that Anti-Flag, or Against Me! signed to a major label? I don't care, or certainly I wouldn't

waste my breath attacking them for doing that. Quite the opposite, I'd be applauding them for, as far as I can tell, not diluting their message. Are they compromising, being a slave to the man? Maybe. Are they going to turn on people who don't have access to the cool, indie, DIY stuff? Let's hope so. In the grand scheme of things, I think it's kind of irrelevant.

From a purely selfish, propagandistic point of view, if one thinks that what AK does is somehow ethically OK and good, we should be encouraged and applauded. We table a wide variety of events, independent shows, and a few corporate ones. The few corporate events we've tabled, we've done that because the bands involved made it easy to do so, were welcoming…

MRR: Which bands?
R: Rage Against the Machine, for example. Unfortunately they broke up, but on their last tour they did a lot of great things. One of the great things they did was at the Oakland Coliseum, they went out of their way to ask us to come table at this concert. Not only did they invite us, but they had about twenty or thirty other groups. Everyone from Global Exchange to Rainforest Action Network—a whole plethora of groups that most people would think were right on and doing good, ethical things. We went to this huge Coliseum, we had a table set up. It was all prearranged, we didn't have to pay merchandising fees or deal with any bureaucracy; they did all of that. And at that one little table, we sold about $1000 worth of shit to, presumably, a tiny percentage of these 20,000 fans that came to see this huge, evil, corporate, overpriced band… Rage Against the Machine went out of their way and made it very easy for us and numerous other activists groups to peddle their wares to talk to concert-goers, whatever each of the groups wanted to get out of it. Was that AK selling out to the evil Sony corporate machine, or was that us actually getting across to an audience that perhaps had never seen this kind of material before? Is that a fair question? Obviously, we did it, you have my answer. Is that better or worse or ethically different than AK tabling at a basement show? Or any DIY endeavor?

MRR: If our goal is to actually create an alternative little world of our own, and ultimately an entirely different system, but we're just talking about it, propagandizing about it, singing about it, and say we decide we're gonna use the system as much as possible in whatever way it can help us to talk about it, then where is the alternative, where does it live?
R: I think it's a fair question, and like all the questions that have been posed so far by this debate, I don't think there's any black-and-white answers. I don't think they're questions so much as processes—a series of processes. I think that the ethics, or the lines in the sand, change. I don't think these are fixed, rigid things.

As you were framing that question, all kinds of things came to mind. Is a series of independent successful little capitalist enterprises an alternative to anything?

One of the contradictions of punk has always been: one likes punk when it's one's group of friends, and one feels like it's somewhat exclusive. And punk is always bad when the people we don't like come into the club. As soon the club widens its borders it no longer becomes sort of this in thing. The people that we didn't like in high school suddenly like what we like, then punk isn't for the outsiders and the misfits anymore, then it's either cool or not cool. Any band that becomes more popular even on the same label… Against Me! were accused of selling out as soon as they stopped playing in basements and signed to Fat Wreck Chords. By the definitions of ethics, nothing had changed.

I believe in the self-emancipation of the majority of the world's population. The working class. That is going to include, by definition, all sorts of people I might not like—certainly their taste in music, or their personal dietary habits or whatever. Nevertheless, part of that contradiction is that these are people that need to be reached. If I was actually genuine about not just wanting to be an exclusive club for whoever, the misfits or the outsiders, how do we get beyond it? That's where it starts to become complicated. Maybe that's where we have to extend the sexist band, because no one is perfect.

When one is dealing with the real world, one has to make messy, complicated, contradictory decisions. One has to pay the rent. One has to deal with people one doesn't necessarily personally like.

MRR: So the answer to the question, "Where does the alternative live?"—maybe it lives in the ethics.
R: That's something that we debate within AK a lot. We debate all kinds of things. But as a ten-person collective, AK is not monolithic in ideals, in ethics. We are on the same page by and large, but again, the messy realities in life often intrude. So one of those things is that we think the way we internally organize is a good thing; the structure to us is very important. But we think, without sounding arrogant, the way AK organizes, the way we are all equally remunerated, the equal decision-making, is crucially important. Not just because that's a sensible way to organize, in a business sense, but politically, socially, ethically.

However, virtually no one knows that. So in one sense, your question is…or perhaps we say for *Maximum*. If someone picks up a copy of *Maximum* at Borders and read it…I'm guessing if they're young, they don't know the history of the magazine, the politics, or debates or anything like that. If they just pick up *Maximum*, it's not immediately apparent that there are not major labels or major-affiliated/distributed labels advertised or reviewed here. They just think it's an independent magazine.

MRR: Maybe we should just state that loudly and clearly.
R: That debate goes on within AK. The debate is, on one hand, as a propagandist, we don't want to put people off. That's why AK Press wasn't called Fuck the System press. Or, you know, We're Anarchists, Fuck You, We're Gonna Kill You All Eventually Press. It's called AK Press because that can mean many things to many people. We're not going to antagonize liberals, conservatives, Christians, by the name. By that logic, we don't want to emblazon in our catalogue, on our website which goes out to… The majority of people do not share our politics; we don't want to put them off. That's one argument. The other argument is, are we this living embodiment of the great ideal and is that in itself a great propaganda model?

We have now started to say we're an anarchist collective.

But we don't go into any great detail. Again, what's an anarchist collective? You tell me. I mean, we don't spell out the excruciating detail of what that means. We don't say we're all part of this thing and that's important because…

MRR: Why not though?
R: Well, that's a debate that's currently happening in AK in many ways. How best to put out that example. The example is propaganda by the deed, in that sense. AK's very existence, the way we internally organize, is that a shining example of DIY practice?

MRR: It seems like the first thing people think of when they think of honesty and ethics is in terms of people getting paid. That's the number one thing, that's how we decide who is a good or bad business: are your artists getting paid? But is that really the important thing? I thought ethical business embodied a whole lot more than that.
R: I think it's *an* important thing. On a very sort of mundane, decent human level…you know, treat others as you'd like to be treated yourself. If a person is as good as their word, that word should mean something. You shouldn't lie, cheat and steal; that's not cool. To me that means something. AK thinks it's important that people get paid whenever possible, for their work. AK also exists, to some extent, very much on the unpaid and underpaid exploitation—for want of a better term—of the collective and of various other people that help us out. *Maximum* exists the same way.

Again, these things are important because we live in a capitalist society. How to measure worth? AK does not pay its collective members, nor people that we do pay, designers, editors, we don't pay the market rate. Are we ripping them off? We actually pay our authors market rate. We don't pay ourselves market rate. We don't pay people that design book covers for us market rate. Are we ripping them off? I mean, no, we're being honest. We tell them in advance. We're not lying to them. We don't say, "Hey, design this book cover, but you're only getting $200—ha ha ha, we fooled you there!"

Is that another compromise on the basis of capitalism? Yes. Is that compromising our ethics? No.

MRR: Is big business unethical by nature?
R: Depends on the definition of ethics. I think big business is very ethical, much more aware, much more honest about its ethics on its own terms. Big business is very explicit that there's a vicious class war going on. Big business talks in incredibly crude, Marxist terms about the us-and-them and the haves an have-nots. Just honest about what they want. Big business and the powers that be have their own trade journals, their own equivalents of *Maximum Rocknroll*. If you read the *Financial Times*, or the *Economist*, or the trade organs of big business, they make no bones about it. They have their own set of ethics, the ethics is the pursuit of power and profit to benefit themselves at the expense of others. Absolutely. So they have a set of ethics. It's diametrically opposed to mine and yours and most people reading this for sure. The right wing has ethics, they're just very different. They're actually in many ways a lot more honest about it. They're saying, we have a right to fuck you over, and fuck you.

MRR: More honest about it than…
R: I dunno, than the indie label who says, "Hey we're all in this together… buuut we're not gonna pay you." I mean, do the major labels have better ethics? "Hey, man, we're gonna keep you on as long as you're making us money. And we're gonna do what we can to make money off you." There's not really any secret about that. We're gonna vouch you this money and we're gonna recoup it all.

MRR: I don't think they lay it out like that, though. I think they are dishonest, usually.
R: But in terms of people who run things and make those decisions, sure. We're gonna downsize you. Why? Because it's not profitable. We're gonna send the factory off to Mexico or to China. That's the way the world runs, and they're very explicit about it. That's the way that IMF and the World Bank and George Bush and John Kerry and everybody else… that's the way the world is. Fuck yeah. I mean, they have a set of ethics, they think it's just and right and true and God's on their side. They have morals and ethics. I just fundamentally disagree with them and want to kill them all. But they have ethics. The right wing has philosophers and ethicists. What's the difference between Adam Smith and Martin Luther King? It's a different set of ethics, it's a different world view, it's a different way of where you place value and what you want to do, I guess.

MRR: I mean, are they… I don't like to use the word evil.
R: I think they're very evil, but I think part of dealing with that is understanding their motivations and not… There's a real problem and a real danger in the kind of stuff we've been talking about and a lot of debates that go on, is to resort to the old black and white easy simple answers in that caricature. Major labels are bad because they're evil, hence anyone that has anything whatsoever to do with major labels is irrevocable tainted of that evil, in a sense beyond the pale. DIY is good because it's DIY and that in and of itself must be a good thing. I think both of those statements are utterly absurd. There may be more…to use a word like truth is kinda weird… but I there's a lot more to be said for both of those statements, and I think they can be fleshed out and contextualized. But I think both of those of those bold black and white statements are absurd. Life is a lot more complicated.

the end.

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THE FIRST STEP

This interview was conducted in March 2006 over the phone by Carl Cordova.

MRR: Basic intro question: Who is in the band, and what do they play?

Stephen: My name is Stephen, and I sing for The First Step. Aaron plays guitar. Israel plays drums. Greg Bacon plays bass. From time to time Aram plays second guitar.

MRR: Is there an overall goal that The First Step is trying to accomplish as a band?

Stephen: We started playing in 2001, so we've been a band for almost five years now. Our goals have definitely grown as a band since then. We have always set out to do something with a focused, positive message. We were well aware that this kind of stuff had been done ad naseum, but our goal was to play hardcore that we loved, where the message was more than just the music.

MRR: Somewhere in those five years you guys called it quits for about a year. Was this because you didn't think people were being receptive?

Stephen: There were a lot of things at that point that all hit at the same time for us. We were really good friends at the time with a band called Desperate Measures. We both started around the same time, and we

played a lot of shows together early on. For the lack of a better word, they were like our brother band. When things started going really sour between us, it put a bad taste in our mouth. Coupled with that, we felt we were spinning our wheels. I think that year break allowed us to re-evaluate our goals and step back from everything.

MRR: As The First Step became a little bigger, you guys were also getting a lot of criticism thrown your way. Did this affect the break up?

Stephen: Yes and no. I think you can approach this scene in two different ways: You can care what other people think, or you can say fuck 'em and play music that you want to play. In these five years we have grown towards the latter. Of course, there has to be a connection between us and the people listening. That's what hardcore is all about. We may have second-guessed ourselves a little. But we never shied back from the criticism, whether it was speaking out on vegetarianism, or…

MRR: What about the criticism that The First Step is this cookie-cutter, throwback youth crew band?

Stephen: That's a great question. It's definitely the biggest criticism. We love youth crew bands. We grew up listening to the bands from the late '80s that centered around the New York hardcore/ Revelation Records scene—bands like Youth of Today, Side By Side, and Bold. But at the same time we grew up listening to bands like the Dead Kennedys and Black Flag. One of the first records I ever bought was the Stalag 13 12".

MRR: Where do you think that criticism stems from, because it keeps on coming up a lot.

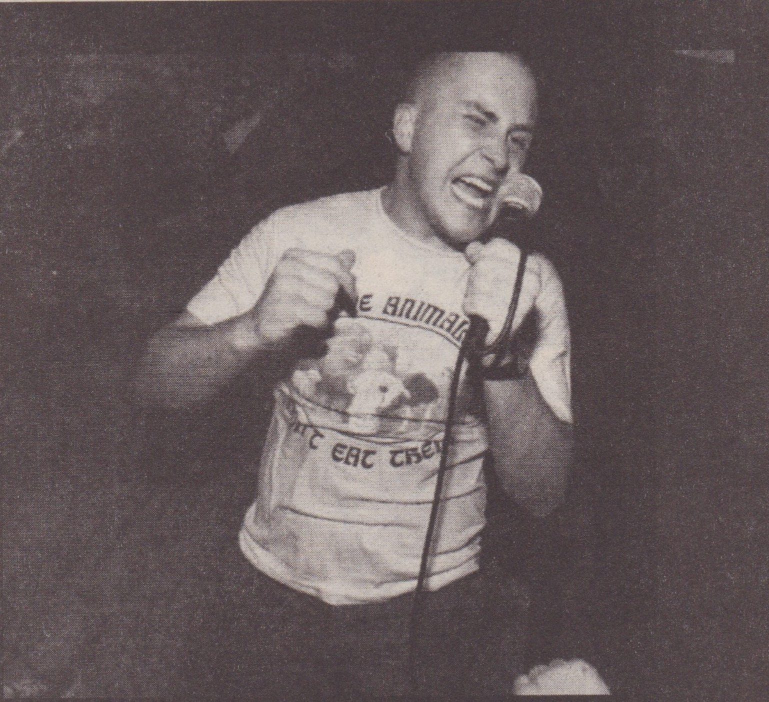
Stephen: I think a good part of it comes down to the way we present ourselves and the iconography of our records. I can understand if someone picked up our records, and let's say reviewed them in a zine like *MRR*—they would be bound to make some assumptions about us. That's the way things go. Most of our friends know youth crew is not the only dynamic of our band, or to us as people. That is what matters most.

MRR: Let's move on and talk about the new album that is coming out. When did you guys record the full length?

Stephen: We started recording in the winter of 2005. It took awhile to get things completed since everyone is spread out all over the East Coast.

MRR: What kept it in limbo for so long? What made you finally go with Rivalry Records instead of Livewire?

Stephen: There were a lot of delays in the scheduling department. In a nutshell, we started drifting apart from Ed and Livewire Records based on a lack of communication. He got married, and was going to school. In the beginning, Livewire and The First Step grew together. We still



feel like we have a lot more room to grow, where Livewire Records is now just a message board.

MRR: How did you get Walter Schreifels (Gorilla Biscuits, Warzone, Quicksand, Youth of Today) to produce your full length?

Stephen: The guys from Livewire knew Joe Nelson, the original singer for Ignite. Joe was friends with Walter from back in the day. Since we knew hardly anything about the recording process, we thought it would be cool to have someone actually produce it. When we joked around with Ed from Livewire about getting Walter, we never thought it would actually be a possibility.

MRR: What did you send Walter?

Stephen: We sent him the six-song *What We Know* demo, as well as the *Open Hearts…* EP. He loved them. He was actually itching to produce another hardcore record, so we hit him up at the right time. Rival Schools had just broken up, and Walking Concert had yet to really start up.

MRR: How was that experience?

Stephen: Anyone who has ever met Walter knows that guy is doing his own thing. The guy is on his own plane of existence. He is a great dude, but he is doing his *own thing*. Everyone in the band was surprised that he was still so much into hardcore. He brought a lot of much needed enthusiasm to the recording process. A lot of people think that Walter has gone off onto this weird hippie tangent, and to a certain extent he has. I like to call it Walterland. Apparently he has always been like that. One day in the studio Aaron struck a chord on the guitar that made Walter pick up a guitar and a start playing Bl'ast

He played almost every song off *It's in My Blood* at the drop of the hat while we all sat there watching. Later, we had this huge conversation about "Ready to Fight," and how it was one of the best-written hardcore songs of all time. It wasn't just that he was still into hardcore that had us pumped. He is just one of those guys that after hanging out with him, you immediately become inspired. All I wanted to do after hanging out with him was to go home, lock myself in my bedroom, and start writing new material.

MRR: It's not everyday that a DIY hardcore band gets someone besides the recording engineer to produce a record. How involved was Walter in the process?

Stephen: He sat around a practiced with us a few times. As far as the actual song structures go, he made a few changes. The most notable would be the ending of "Pursuit of Happiness", where he made a chord change to what Aaron had written on the demo. It was really cool having someone who kept on pushing us to try different things. He was a big proponent of that. There was actually a jam session of sorts that didn't make it on the record. Aaron had this really cool riff with a kind of SSD feel to it. We had extra time after recording drums, so Walter picked up a guitar, Izzy got behind the drums, and Aaron jumped on bass, and they jammed this song out. Walter went crazy on guitar. To see a guy like that with no practice come up with all these crazy sounding guitar parts was really cool. It was an awesome experience.

MRR: How long have you been playing music?

Stephen: I moved to North Carolina when I was 12. The first band I ever started was with these kids from Greensburg. Originally, our goal was to sound like Envy from Buffalo. For those who don't know, Envy was fronted by none other than the infamous Larry Ransom. We were called Until Today, and released a few EPs. That started in 1997, so I have been playing in bands for about 10 years now.

MRR: Is being a social outcast relevant or necessary to fully understand what it means to be a punk or hardcore kid?

Stephen: Yes and no. I don't think being a social outcast is necessary, but it definitely helps. I think there is a certain part of society that you and I don't necessarily click with.

MRR: I am not talking about being straight edge.

Stephen: I am not talking about that either. And I am not talking about the "Another State of Mind" pundit punks. I don't feel like a social outcast. But I definitely feel like I am different, and that I am a part of something different. If you are involved in hardcore or people like to obsess with or glorify that aspect of punk. Just because I don't want to define myself by my differences doesn't negate my passion for all of this.

MRR: Does life after The First Step mean life after hardcore for you?

Stephen: Punk and hardcore are pretty well embedded into my head, and it will always play a big part in my life. I don't think that is going to change. But at the same time I'm getting married this summer, and I plan on starting a family soon. Punk and hardcore will definitely take a back seat once I start trying to raise a child.

MRR: Alright, before we call this interview quits, let's play a round of word association. If you don't know how it works, I am going to say a word or a phrase, and you need to respond with the first thing that pops into your head. Here we go:

North Carolina: Tarheels.

Touring: Swimming

Converse: Wilt Chamberlain

Bad Stage Dives: Germany

Waffles: Waffle House

Surburbia: Track housing

Black Flag: Henry Rollins

Dog Tags: Courage Crew

Shirtless: Smelly

Vans: The First Step

Acoustic Guitar: Neil Young

Sunset: Beach

Wolf: Pack

Metal: Slayer

California: Good music

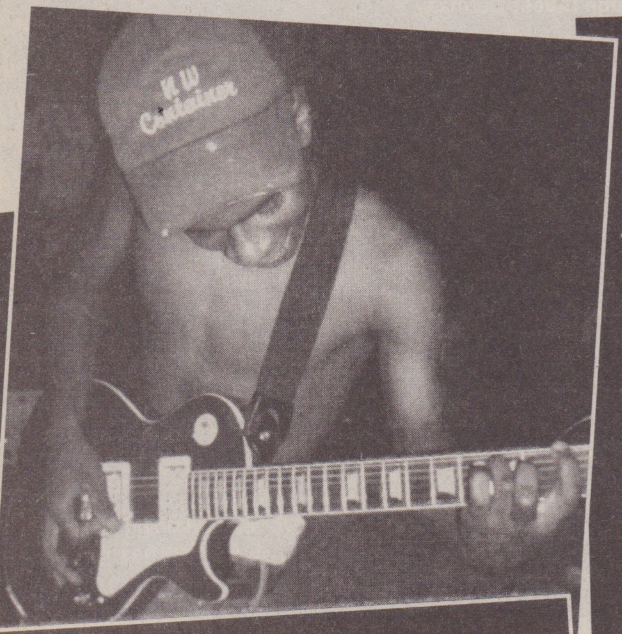
Overrated: No Warning

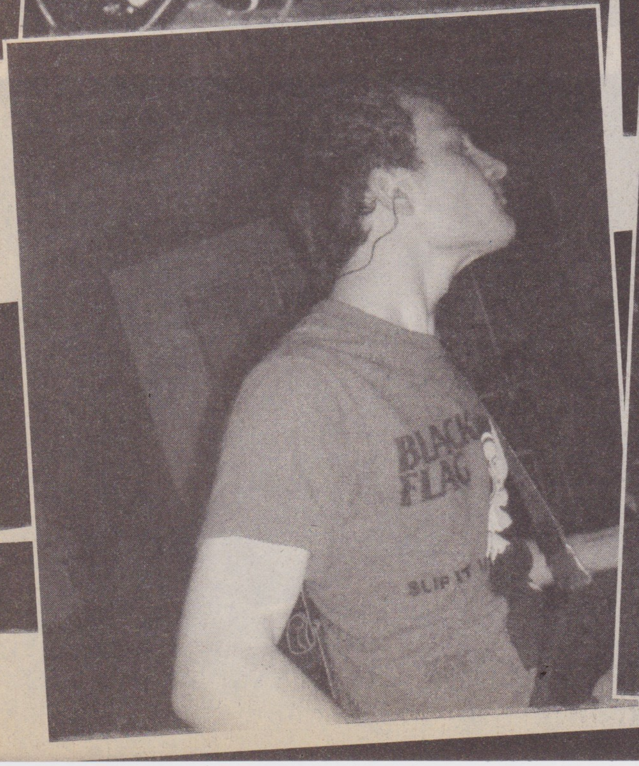
Burrito: Secret Spot in HB

MRR: Any last words?

Stephen: Thanks Carl for the interview. We've been doing this band for awhile, and we are very grateful to anybody that has given us a chance.

DECONDITIONED





Some months ago, I noticed a record in the pile of incoming stuff here at MRR that caught my eye. Packaged in clear plastic with bright pink vinyl shining through, I noted the band name—Deconditioned—and popped the record onto the turntable. Having heard of the band but having never listened to them before, I expected something more straightforward than I encountered. I was pleasantly surprised to hear an amalgam of classic US hardcore influences with some more weird and wild elements than most of the records that come through here. After a great set at Gilman, a tired but happy Deconditoned made their way back to MRR HQ for a long and interesting chat about making music and what it means to be in a band; we pick up amidst a conversation about the show. Interview and introduction by Golnar. Dan: vocals. Matt: drums. McKenzie: guitar. Sam: bass.

MRR: ...Gilman can be hard place for some bands to play, I think. With the number of people who were watching you tonight, if the show had been in a basement or smaller warehouse, it would've seemed super packed. But since Gilman so big and cavernous, I think it's nerve-wracking for a lot of bands to play there. Maybe the audience seems more inhibited?

But it seemed like tonight's show went really well. People loved you!

Matt: I don't think we've ever played an inhibited set there. The only thing inhibited about us at Gilman is…

Dan: …playing early…

Matt: Yeah, less time to get drunk. *[laughter]* We've played some pretty sloppy sets in the Bay. It's been a bad scene.

Mackenzie: Very bad. *[laughter]*

Matt: We'd always heard that stuff about Gilman before we first played there. The first show we played there was a little rough, but every show after that we've gotten pretty good responses, and they've been better every time we've played there—this was our fifth time playing Gilman—every time, more people have gone crazy for our band, and we've noticed more and more people specifically coming for our band. I think Gilman is kind of a challenge, and I appreciate that. I appreciate that people there are on the ball and you don't have to worry that the show is going to fall through.

Sam: You get variety there too. We've played with a lot of different kinds of bands.

Matt: Yeah, it's way more interesting than playing shows with a bunch of bands that are supposedly in the style of your band…

Dan: I prefer it when there is more inter-mixing. Like at the Pirate's Cove in Allentown they'll have all kinds of bands—indie rock bands play with youth crew bands for example—and I think that's cool. Our thing is that we don't want to play to just one scene.

MRR: I appreciate that about Gilman too. The best thing about the Bay Area scene—that it's big and that there are a *lot* of people involved in punk—can sometimes be the worst thing in terms of bands mixing. You know, in a small town with a much smaller scene all kinds of bands play together, but here it's totally possible to have an all-garage bill, or an all thrash bill, or an all pop-punk bill...

Dan: In Olympia, where I live, the scene isn't huge, so you have different types of people coming out to shows who would kind of be enemies in a big city.

MRR: You don't all live in Olympia, do you?

Matt: We're originally a Seattle band, and we consider ourselves to be from Seattle as a band because I think we sound like we've been influenced by Seattle bands through the ages. We first because a Seattle band minus Dan, who was the Olympia guy. But we all live in different places now. I live in Portland.

Sam: And while now I'm still legally a resident of Seattle, and I consider myself a Seattle-ite, I go to school in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Matt: Yeah, even though most of us don't really like Seattle, we consider ourselves a Seattle band. *[laughter]*

Sam: I like the term "Seattle band" because I like to think of us as part of the continuum of Seattle music. A lot of my favorite music has come from Seattle in particular and Washington State in general. I really think that part of our music identity is from there.

MRR: I wanted to talk to you about the scene in Seattle, but since you don't live there...

Matt: No, we'll talk about it…

Sam: We'll shit talk it…*[laughter]*

Matt: No, we'll be intelligent about it.

MRR: Well, I'll edit out all the intelligent parts...

Sam: And just leave the shit talking and being dumb…*[laughter]*

MRR: Let's talk about your lyrics. In a lot of them, there is definitely the sense of being an outsider. I wanted to ask if that was a you vs. society sentiment, or if it had to do with punk or Seattle in specific, because some of the lyrics do seem geared that way.

Dan: It's a combination of those things. I write lyrics when I'm in different moods, and am reflecting on different things. I feel like half the time I hate society, and the other half I want to make society better. Call it guilt or whatever it may be. When people say there's no hope, I think that's a copout. Like the song "Recluse"—it's about breaking out of your routine, which is something I'm still working on. And not necessarily looking at it in some self-serving, hedonistic way, but just trying to gain value from your surroundings.

Matt: There was a time when Dan would have lyrics before the music, but for quite a while we've had the music first now, and we always look at the lyrics together and see if we identify with them and relate to them. We give him pointers, just like he criticizes our music. We think that the whole package of what we put out is really important; we feel that our band should be a unified front.

MRR: Has it always been you same four guys?

Matt: Yeah, basically. The core, and everything that has been on record has been all four of us, and most of the tours have been all four of us. But going back to your original question, I think that everyone in this band feels like something of an outsider. Not just in a punk sense. Some of us felt that we could find more to relate to in punk, but we didn't feel like any less of outsiders than we did before. We felt like we found our friends—and pretty much, these three guys are my best friends. We're all music fans first before we're punk fans. We developed our political and life views before we listened to all the records that turned us on to shit.

We love punk rock, and we love what it's about. But first and foremost, this band is about making music that we feel moves us and challenges us and hopefully challenges someone else.

Dan: When I write lyrics, I have a very specific idea of whose going to be reading them, whose going to be listening to our band. My idea is that I want to take certain things and give different perspectives on them, to help people see them in different lights.

MRR: What was the inspiration behind the lyrics, "You look down on me when I'm not the one that had it easy." Is it hard to relate to most punk kids because of their backgrounds? Or is that song about how people carry themselves and their bands?

Dan: That song, and that line, can have a lot of different meanings, and people who can relate to it will interpret it differently. For me it has to do with finding a lot of the punk scene to lack any real urgency, musically or socially. I *do* find it hard to relate to some people in the punk scene who are more well-adjusted, or who didn't grow up feeling pissed off and alienated, or are used to taking their scene for granted because there was always someone else to do it for them.

MRR: I think the lyrics fit the music really well—they are not necessarily straightforward or by the numbers.

Matt: We are looking to fit moods. Like, we just turned Dan on to the Jesus Lizard and he really liked how in some of their music the lyrics and the sound of the music fit together. There is a Jesus Lizard song called "Seasick," which Dan was really struck by, because you can just *feel* the lyrics of the song.

Dan: Yeah, the chorus of that song goes, "I can't swim," and both the riffs that come in…

Sam: …sound like motion.

Dan: …yeah, and paints a picture of a ship on a relatively calm night, but then there's some problem and it's sinking and the person cannot swim, or fears they cannot swim.

MRR: There is an anti-war song on the LP ("Not Who You Think")—is Deconditioned a political band?

Dan: We wanted to address politics from the beginning, and more so early on, but have never been a strictly political band. The most important thing for me is to write about things that affect me or move me, or to offer perspectives that I don't see getting put forth. With that song, for instance, I wanted to say more than "war is bad." I wanted to say, "the opposition to this war can no longer be dismissed as hippie nonsense or anti-Americanism" at a time when anti-war sentiment was getting equated with Saddam sympathy or '60s nostalgia. "Where Am I?" and "Tim Eyman" are both about political and social implications that *have* directly affected me.

MRR: Are the new lyrics you've written for the upcoming EP different?

Dan: The subjects and most of the actual lyrics aren't any different in spite of the change in musical direction, but after hearing the newer songs, I wanted to tweak some of the wording and how I match them to the music. It's cool though, because it's allowed me to experiment with different vocal stylings and ways of articulating and enunciating my words. There's definitely been a lot of trial and error, but how else do you come up with something new?

MRR: More about the music you guys play...the most common thing I've read in reviews of your band is that you're Black Flag influenced, which I think is accurate but only one part of the picture. When a band is starting out, I think there is a tendency to try to mine one sound or another, but it seems that especially now there is a lot more at work in your sound than at the beginning. You've changed quite a bit since that first record...

MacKenzie: Our band has definitely evolved. Because back in the day, we were *really* straightforward.

Sam: We'd hear new stuff—like, at some point into the band we heard Jerry's Kids and we were all, "We'll sound like this!" *[laughter]*

Matt: As we get turned onto things, or as one of us would get the rest of us really pumped on something we'd try to incorporate more stuff into our sound. But then, we'd always try to check ourselves—make tapes, listen to the songs—and try to make sure to have our own spin. And we're all kind of retarded and weird and bizarre, so even when we tried to do that it never sounded quite like that, even if it didn't sound quite as unique as we'd like it to. Though now I think we've really found our sound.

We want our LP as well as everything we're doing after the LP to sound like a collection of all the music that we listen to both before and after and during we all listen to punk rock music. We want to collect all of our influences and try to represent all that we love about music.

Sam: Just Jackson Pollock them [our influences]. *[laughter]*

MRR: I remember when the 7" came out, seeing it around but not picking it up...

Sam: I don't blame you. *[laughter]*

MRR: ...but when the LP came in here, I recall being kind of shocked like, "I didn't think this band sounded like this..." So I pulled out the other one, and it is quite different. Was that shift in sound a really conscious decision, or was it organic?

Sam: It was because at the time of the 7" and everything before that, Matt wrote all the music with Dan throwing in a riff every now and then. On the LP, I started to write songs, and I like to think I wrote some of the weirder, more out of place songs on the LP. We collaborated a lot more, and jammed out on stuff a lot. And I hate that term, but it's true—we jammed.

Matt: Also, we didn't play together for a long time in between the second 7" being recorded and the LP. We recorded the 7" and it didn't come out for a year after that, so by the time it came out we didn't even really sound a lot like the record, which was a bummer. I guess a lot of bands have had that problem over the years. And we've put everything out ourselves the whole time we've been a band, which means that things can be kind of slow sometimes.

MRR: Do you guys do the label (Beginning Era, formerly Banal Existence) together?

Matt: It's mainly me. And Dan does help a lot.

MRR: Have you put out other stuff?

Matt: Yeah. The first record—it's number one though it came out second—was the Lords of Lightspeed 12". It was by the guys who are now in Wolves in the Throne Room and Josh Plague from Mukilteo Fairies and Behead the Prophet. It's like queercore meets black metal, with just crazy, amazing vocals. Josh Plague one told me that HR was his main vocal influence, which is funny because Josh is very gay and HR is uh…not so down with that.

[long conversation about HR being crazy, how great the first Bad Brains record is, idiot savants, and how often people who suffer from mental illness are capable of creating the most inspiring art. The conversation then turned back to music, genre definitions, and the boundaries of punk…]

Sam: It's confusing because there was a time when Hüsker Dü and the Black Flag and the Minutemen were all categorized together, but there wasn't a lot of polarization between bands.

Dan: Every hardcore band didn't sound the same

MRR: But at the same time, there were lots of "hardcore" kids who hated bands like the Minutemen. Those kinds of weird scene rules and agendas have always existed; that "golden era" had it's fair share of problems...There have always been and continue to be people who feel like hardcore has to be one rigid idea, and there have always been bands who have gone their own way...

Matt: We don't even call ourselves a hardcore band anymore—we're just a band, though we are for the most part playing hardcore punk rock. We're definitely kind of arty, and we try to be twisted about things.

Sam: We try to retain our pop sensibility *[laughter]*

Matt: My favorite bands of that early era that people deemed to be hardcore didn't necessarily consider themselves hardcore. They were just playing music, trying to expand minds. Whether it was Black Flag, Minutemen, or Scratch Acid and Jesus Lizard, or Meat Puppets.

And a lot of those second wave punk guys are really intelligent guys, and they have interesting things to say, which you can tell in reading interviews with them, or hearing them speak. Sam and I saw *We Jam Econo* about the Minutemen and it was so heavy that it moved me to tears.

Sam: The thing that people don't appreciate is that people think that those bands happened overnight, or they accidentally invented a new sound. But it was all very deliberate.

Matt: Well, originally bands were trying to one-up each other. They were trying to blow minds and be free-form about it.

Sam: But you don't really see that now.

Matt: It was punk rock because it was raw and of the people. That's what made it punk rock. But it wasn't careless, which is what intrigued me about it. And those guys would get into art movements, like, "Whoa, dadaism, let's check that out."

Sam: And bands like Sonic Youth were very much into the visual arts scene.

MRR: What I've always appreciated about some of those bands is that it seems like they were who they were, and their bands were what they were trying to do in the first place—punk rock just gave them the tool with which to do so.

Matt: I think we'll always be playing punk rock in one form or another, or our intent will be punk, even though right now, honestly, this is just the sound of *music* to me. The movement—punk rock—as it stands is a sub-culture, not a counter-culture…

MRR: Do you mean that negatively? I'm not sure I understand...?

Matt: There was a time when punk rock was a counter-cultural force, it was an important movement that affected change on the mainstream and had an effect on both the musical climate as well as the social and political climate at the time. Right now, it hasn't been for sometime; it's been looking way too inward.

Sam: So much of the music today in the punk scene is people exhibiting this calamitous loss in their ability to express themselves. They write songs, but at the end of the day they're just where they started. I find it very disturbing.

Matt: I think music should be a blast, but it should be more than just having fun. And more than just the lyrics. Like, if you're going to have a message band of any kind, you're music better be able to back it up. I think it's important to have a world view as a band, and to be able to back it up with your music. People should try to express themselves as well as what they like.

MacKenzie: Incorporate your feelings into your music. If that's not the purpose of music, then it's how the best music is created. You can really capture the feeling of the person who created it.

Sam: I disagree. I think that self-expression is the *sole* purpose of music.

Matt: How is that disagreeing with what he just said? *[laughter]*

Matt: If you're going to be in band, go out there and put all of your fucking guts and balls and sweat into it…

Sam: Unless you're doing that, you don't have a right to demand a response.

Matt: That's what I like about where our band is at right now, I think it represents who all of us are. You listen to it, and I think that all of us are in it. It's not just one dude or two dudes and some people playing. We're a band now. That's why we're still together after a lot of BS and four and half years.

the end.

HEADACHE CITY

Meet the members of Headache City and they may come off as quiet, even casually aloof. Don't be fooled. There's much more to this three-year-old Chicago dinge-pop band than the discerning garage rocker eye can see. The members are collectively like a brother and sister who beat the hell out of each other, yet talk so fondly of the other when apart. They bitch at each other, pull silent treatments, and sling some pretty harsh insults, but when Headache City plays music, they're thick as thieves. And don't fuck with one of them either, because the others will gang up on you. It's this rocky relationship that brings a bipolarity to the songs on the band's recent, self-titled album, released on Shit Sandwich Records in February.

Equal parts shit-kicking garage rock/punk and wide-eyed optimist pop, the band says that they never strive for a deliberate sound. The song "Suicide Summer" layers shimmering guitar with Beach Blanket Bingo-ish keys and lush vocal harmonies. It's like the perfect soundtrack for sucking on a popsicle while riding your bike on a sunny day. Compare that with "Throw Up Red," a cyclone of howling vocals, thick bass lines, and loud drums. You bite it on your bike, a dog eats your popsicle from the pavement, and you're fucking pissed.

I spoke with Headache City in their tour van, pre-show, during a stormy March night in downtown Chicago. Thunder, steamy windows, burgers, beer, and four voices squabbling like siblings for space on my interview tape. Let the chaos begin.

Interview and introduction by Jen Hazen. Photos by Sherry Cardino.

THE LINE-UP:

Mike Fitzpatrick: Singer and guitarist who juggles two other bands, The Latest and Cococoma. Recently married. Owns cute mutt named George. Cooks up some amazing BBQ.

Norah Utley: Keyboard and backup vocals. Runs Shit Sandwich Records. Owns crafty business Sheriff Peanut. Married. Two boxers: Lemmy and Chewy. Notorious for losing voice often due to incessant yelling.

Lisa Roe: Drummer. Librarian. Also in band Cococoma with husband, Bill Roe. Owner of miniature dachshund, Rod. Obsessed with TIVO.

David Head: Bassist and back-up vocals. Graphic Designer. Boyfriend of this writer. Known for musical stint with The Motards in the 1990s. One miniature dachshund: Talia. Two cats: Coco and Little Bee. Does a mean ho-down.

THE YELLING MATCH:

MRR: There seems to be a bit of a divide in the band about the style of your music, let's call it garage-ness vs. pop-ness. What do you think about that?

Norah: Are you saying that a lot of people don't like us?

MRR: Jesus.

Lisa: I don't think this band is "garage-y" that much at all. I think that people appreciate that we can't be pinned down.

Mike: We never really thought about it. That's all we have to say at the end of the day. *[everyone laughs]*

MRR: So, obviously, you don't sound like anyone else. Yeah.

Lisa: *Ever!*

MRR: Well, if each of you could compare Headache City's sound to another band, new or old, who would it be?

Norah: I think that Mike's vocals remind me of Scared of Chaka, which is my favorite band.

Lisa: I don't know. I'm the latest incoming member and I was a fan of the band. I liked the elements that reminded me of early Blondie. Then I joined the band...and hated it.

Mike: Really?

David: I think we sound sort of like the Modern Lovers.

Mike: It all sounds familiar, basically. I just don't know where I've heard it before.

MRR: Let's talk about the Goner Records message boards. What have people been saying about the album lately?

Lisa: I haven't been reading anything about us.

MRR: Well, people have been listening to it quite a bit, from what I'm noticing.

Lisa: The thing that I've heard from people is that it's an ultimate "grow on you" record. Initially, it was like "This is okay, but.."—then they end up listening to it non-stop.

Norah: Is it weird to hear us say, "Oh, our record's so awesome!" Jen?

MRR: Not really.

Norah: Also, about our great, awesome record that's so great that everybody loves it... Yeah, it's all I listen to.

MRR: Mike, do you get on the Goner Boards at all?

Mike: No...I mean, I look at it once in a while.

Norah and Lisa: Oh, you do, too!

Mike: Not every day!

MRR: You kinda don't give a shit what other people think, do you Mike? How do you feel about your vocal frequently being compared to Frank Black?

Norah: I think people say that we remind them of the Pixies. That's a nice compliment, but I don't hear it.

Mike: Because it's kinda poppy. Kinda noisy.

Norah: And Mike kinda looks like Frank Black.

David: They hear the guitars and it maybe sounds a little bit like it. Then they see Mike and it's a subconscious thing.

MRR: Dave, I know I shouldn't bring up the Motards. How do you feel about that Rollergirls show on A&E playing Motards songs?

Lisa: The Motards are like Dave's Vietnam! *[everyone laughs]*

David: I haven't seen our song being played on the show, so...

MRR: But we did watch a bit of an episode last night.

David: At first when I see that show, it's so fucking dumb and the people on it are dumb, but if some kids get into the Motards because of it, whatever. If we go through the trouble of publishing our songs, we get royalties.

Norah: Well, Billy Ocean got some-

thing like $15,000 from *Mr. Show* when they used 45 seconds of one of his songs.

MRR: What? "Caribbean Queen"?
David: I want to talk everyone into donating any royalty funds to the Sims foundation in Austin, Texas. It's a non-profit that provides local musicians and their families with low-cost mental health services.

MRR: Can you talk about some of the college station airplay the new album has been getting?
Norah: Radio K in Minneapolis. We're #1 or #2 on their loud rock charts.
David: WFMU, New York Public Radio, a station in Portland. KOOP radio in Austin, until the station burned down. The weird thing is apparently the guy who owned the building was the same guy that Dick Cheney shot in the face.

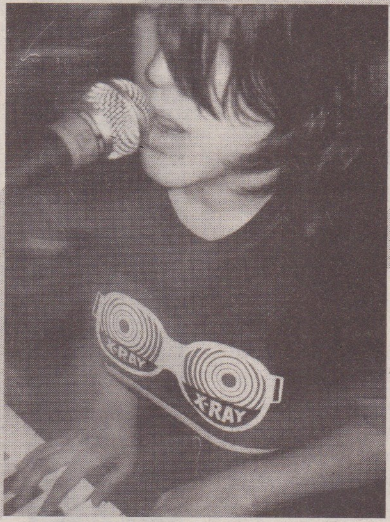
MRR: Buckshot. Can we talk about the lyrics of the new song? I don't even know the name. It's not on the CD, but it's great. I think you're singing "Hey, Ugly" over and over. What is that about?
Norah: When we write a new song, Mike sings and it's kind of just nonsense for lyrics. He was singing his babble and I was like, "Hey, are you singing, 'Hey Utley, you're in the way?'" *[everyone laughs]*. "Or 'Hey Ugly, you're overweight?'" and he said, "I wasn't, but I am now!" Then we changed the song title to "Hey, Ugly."
Lisa: ...and sometimes it's "Peyote, I Rode the Snake" or "Peyote, the Velvet Drape."
Mike: When we write music for a song, we get so excited to play it at a show, that I'll just make shit up...and actually write lyrics down later.

MRR: So, the real name of the song then?
David: "Hey, Ugly."
Lisa: *"Peyote!"*

MRR: So, the other day when I emailed you and told you to send me lyrics, and you wrote back, "I've never written them down," you were serious?
Mike: Yeah.

MRR: So, what if you're on stage and you forget them then?
Mike: I babble.

MRR: So, I could sing out in the audience and the lyrics would always be right. What's your favorite snack food? Lisa, I hear it's Dolly Madison Zingers for you.
Lisa: I love the Zingers.
Mike: Reese's Peanut Butter Eggs. And the Reese's Peanut Butter Hearts.
David: Rice cakes and BBQ.
Norah: Rice cakes are what Bill Cosby



had to eat instead of Hoagies!
MRR: What? He ate Jello Puddin' Pops.
Norah: Is pizza a snack? Is it?

MRR: Yes, Norah.
Lisa: Snackin' cheese. Snackin' cheese. This is the best interview ever!

MRR: I know. What's the story behind "Suicide Summer"?
David: A couple of years ago a bunch of people in Austin, friends of friends, killed themselves...and it all happened in one summer.

MRR: Mike, you wrote the lyrics?
Mike: Yeah, first Dave gave me the song title.

MRR: Mike, I have to say that a lot of the lyrics for this song that you sent to me looked like this: *I don't remember?????*
Mike: Yeah, I left out entire verses, I think.

MRR: One thing that readers probably don't know about each of you...
Norah: Lifetime television makes me cry every time.
Lisa: People are amazed that I'm a children's librarian.
Norah: And also that she doesn't have a penis.
Lisa: You motherfucker, Norah.
Mike: That I *do* have a penis.
David: My life is an open book. And that I don't eat rice cakes.

MRR: Lisa, give me one word that describes Mike and vice versa.
Lisa: Curmudgeon lips.
Mike: Chopper.

MRR: Norah, give me one word that describes Dave and vice versa.
Norah: I want to call him Bones.

MRR: I know I would...
Norah: Metrosexual, how about that?

MRR: I will not fucking print that.
Norah: Mr. Memory because he doesn't remember shit.
David: Norah, the honey.

MRR: So, what's next for Headache City?
Norah: Records and things. Singles.
Mike: The East Coast in the fall, maybe. It's lovely in the fall.
David: We're going to go to Europe so, hey, if you're in Europe and reading this, set it up for us, and we'll be there.
Norah: As long as no one has any babies we'll be okay.
Mike: Yea, you guys... *[referring to Lisa and Norah]*

MRR: Okay, that's it...
Lisa: What, no more questions? Let's talk about more things we like... like snack cakes!

This interview with the excellent, Berlin-based, heavy/sludgy hardcore band Insuiciety was originally conducted by Mike Champagne and pchela 666 for Xtoo drunk to fuckX *fanzine, which is done in Polish. Because relatively few people could read that interview, I decided to translate it here in order to introduce this deserving band to a more worldwide public. Introduction by Filip Trujaca Fala. Photos by Mike Champagne.*

Insuiciety

MRR: How was Insuiciety formed? What was your first line-up and how did it change?

Marek: One day we were standing together with Ajka in front of this guy's window, screaming his name. This was the day that I told them we should form a band together. Later on Andrzej wanted to form a band with our Italian friend, Alex. This didn't work, but was kind of the beginning of Insuiciety; this was the end of 2001. Finally, we played our first gig as Insu on Nov. 2, 2002 in Berlin with Oreiro. Our line-up then was: Judith (bass), Andrzej (git), Ajka (vocal), and me (drums.) Judith stayed with us till April 2003 and then we were practicing without a bass player for a while. We had some shows we were supposed to play, so my roommate Iban joined. We played with him from August till October 2003. Then in March 2004 we played our first gig with Ficek on bass, and we recorded our *Believe And Die* 10" with him as well. Unfortunately, he decided to quit the band in December. Since then we have had Augustina playing bass, although she in fact joined us before Ficek left the band, but was playing second guitar at first. That's it for now.

MRR: What does your name mean?

Marek: There were two bands called Suiciety. We learned about their existence after forming our band, which was called Suiciety at first. One is a HC band from USA (I even have their 7", quite interesting), the second is a metal band from Germany whose record our friend found in some record store. We really liked the name so we added "in" at the beginning and got Insuiciety: Insui(cidal so)ciety.

MRR: What are your musical inspirations? Do you listen only to heavy sludge bands like yours?

Marek: We never planned to sound like some other band. We could talk a lot about bands we listen to, there are so many of them.

Ajka: Of course I like slow and heavy sounding bands and there are plenty of them. Surely Neurosis were and still are the masters! But that's not all that I listen to; I also like lots of "soft" bands. Our inspirations are quite obvious, but it's not like I think that I will sing on some song like this or that band. Rather, it's my improvisation based on reception of the music we play.

MRR: There was a time when you were a 100% Polish band based in Germany. Why do so many Poles live there, and what made you move there?

Marek: Living in Western Europe is much easier than in Poland and it gives you more time for the realization of yourself and your ideas. We came here and stayed, as for now.

Ajka: We were amazed by the fact that there could be so many freaks living in one city, that nobody abuses you on the streets, calling you bitch and shit. Because living here seemed to be so much easier, and still is, at least from the financial side. And one more thing—you know, the one that appears suddenly and keeps you in some place for longer—friendship, love, and the band of course.

MRR: You already released a 10" and you've got more records planned. So, what will they be, and when can we hear then?

Marek: We were in the studio recently, but the work is not finished yet. Our first release, *Believe And Die*, is just out in the US on CD format by Crimes Against Humanity Records.

MRR: Some of you have already played/play in other bands. Tell me about them.

Marek: So let's go: Judith was playing in Peace of Mind, and now is in Battle Royale. Iban was playing guitar in a punk band in Mexico, but unfortunately I don't know the name, he was playing as well in Czerwono Czarni—with people fro Na Krawedzi Deportacji—in Berlin. Ficek was in Epidemia and 4Hippies. Andrzej in Warsaw was in White Rabbit, in Epidemia in Berlin and one more band. Augustina is singing in Riots Not Diets and takes part in several other musical projects. For Ajka, Insu was her first band. I was in Dysmorfofobia and now play bass in Moenster and some other projects from time to time. Recently it was The Fight.

MRR: Your lyrics seem to be of the "no future" type. Don't you see any chances to save mankind? Or is it a new school version of '77 ideals? Who writes the lyrics and where do you find inspiration?

Marek: Well, we are not back for self-destruction. People suck and you can see it on every step! Lyrics for the 10" were written by Ajka and me, now it's her job.

Ajka: For salvation? I can't see any chance for it of course. There is nothing good humanity is bringing to the earth, although we exist thanks to it. You can find self-destruction in all of our civilization. That is its character, though many think there is some progress. I try to use the time I have the best I can, although some may think it makes no sense. I ask myself questions like why, how, and what for? But I am still here and sometimes let positive flashes come to me and motivate me to keep it going. Why not? Every day brings something new and it is very true that a lot depends only on me/you. That's our lyrics: personal, apocalyptical, but with the faith that maybe not everything is lost already.

MRR: Some time ago you took part in a TV program. Why did you go there? From one side it seems to be a good way to promote the band, but on the other, some people saw that as leaving DIY ideas behind.

Marek: This TV program was TVP Kultura, a new subject channel of Polish public TV available through cable operators. I personally don't have TV and don't watch it too much, but I don't think this channel is crap, and didn't hear any bad comments about it. Nobody cheated us there and we were doing it because we wanted to, and in cooperation with our friends. So for us it is totally OK and DIY. Why do you think it means giving up DIY ethics? Because we got paid?

Yes, we did, we got like 800 bucks, which let us come from Berlin to Warsaw, buy new strings, skins for drums, and other crap we needed. We were also able to pay for a recording session we hadn't finish yet. I don't think it means we gave up our DIY ethics. We did it with our friends, who have played in bands with some of us, with Smoku from Post Regiment, so everything stays in the family. This is DIY—cooperate and share your skills—isn't it? Going further in thinking that this is not DIY, then what is? Playing in cultural center for city money? Using Myspace?

Ajka: I have been in situations that have made me feel sad that I shared the same ideas with some people. People doing things in a DIY way often show others a lack of respect or simply rip them off. In TVP Kultura the story was like this—one friend had some idea and asked us to join in. It was a new experience for us, much different from what we usually do. Spontaneously and in a good atmosphere we created something nice. It's not about the financial side, but rather about feeling good about the things you do. Because if you give a lot of yourself you expect gratification, not a lack of satisfaction. I absolutely don't feel used, and don't feel like I broke DIY rules, if you can talk about any rules at all.

MRR: You've been playing for a while, and have played lots of gigs. Do you see differences in gig organization in Poland, Germany, or other European countries? Where did you like playing most and would like to come back, and where do you have the worst memories?

Marek: You think it's a lot? 73 gigs in three years.

Do we see the difference? Of course, in each region, city, country—but I would rather avoid talking about differences. It's a never-ending subject and everybody sees it from a different perspective. I like to come to Lublin, I know people there. I liked playing in France, Rome, Wroclaw, and in Warsaw if it is the festival. All DIY festivals are OK. Besides getting drunk, people are always really open for reception and know what they can expect. Gigs in Germany are good 70% of the time, although people sometimes can be really clumsy and motionless in the pit. Playing tours with bands in which people are cool can be great, like with Born Dead Icons!

MRR: What is playing music for you? Do you want to tell something, give energy to others to do something, or is it only for yourself? Some sort of self-expression?

Marek: I always wanted to pass on something to people through my actions, and still do, although after seeing so many wasted people at the gigs I changed my mind a bit, but only a little bit. Of course I do it to realize and develop myself, maybe mostly to realize. That's why I rehearse and why I reach for my instrument with so much pleasure. Creation, of whatever kind, is one of the most important ways to self-realization and satisfaction.

Ajka: No pedagogy, I am interested in existence, things that your personality consists of—besides the scene, without a mask. For me music is a form of opening myself towards people.

MRR: Some time ago this heavy, sludgy type of music became very popular, especially in the US, and even grew into different scene, which didn't have much to do with DIY punk. The people involved in that scene were often into drugs, and made and listened to music under their influence. Don't you think that in such a situation people lose something important? That music itself stops being the only drug that moves and inspires? That it only becomes the background for a drug trip? How do you feel about making/listening to music while being on drugs?

Marek: Slow and sludgy music is very popular in Europe right now as well. Especially now when people from grindcore or d-beat bands form those "house-project" bands that are so trendy in the scene now. It makes me laugh sometimes, sometimes makes me sad—my problem. In today's line up of Insuiciety nobody uses drugs. Music is what gets us high!

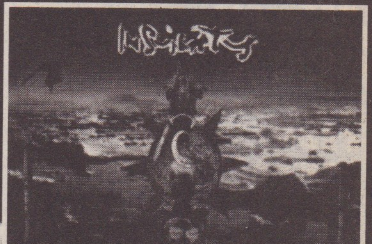
I myself think that selling drugs, also soft drugs (I recommend the DIY way) is shit! Selling drugs is undignified! Fuck it! But I think that there is some truth in Neurosis' theory that soft drugs increase reception. Let's agree—everything is for people, but you must know how to use things. I am overweight because I eat shitty food, if you smoke your taste is fucked up, you drink too much—this can fuck up many things! Drugs can destroy many things in this world. Straight edge is the best thing in this world, although so many straight edge kids suck!

Ajka: It's important to know who is controlling who. Do drugs really help you to create interesting things? My adventure with drugs is over, as they were not inspiring me—quite the opposite, actually. And music can be, and really is a drug itself—it gets you really high.

MRR: Any plans for the near future?

Marek: Actually, yesterday (March 2006) we were in Noisy Rooms studio to transfer our last recordings onto our friend's comp. So we made another step towards our new release. Those are three songs we recorded in late summer 2005 on analog gear in Berlin. Thanks to our friend Artur's help, we managed to digitalize it so hopefully Smoku will be able to mix and master it soon. When we heard this material with Andrzej half a year after recording it we regained the faith that those songs will find their way to people's ears. We might also have a 7" on Trujaca Fala Records. It was recorded on eight-track equipment from the '60s and '70s, so it has this interesting old school dirty sound. As the band we now have a half year-long break, as Augustina went to Ireland for six to eight months. Thanks, and see you on the road!

Thank You Filip and Magda (Trujaca Fala), Stachel and Arne (Unsociable), Nick (Crimes Against Humanity Records), Papciuh, Marta...and friends!

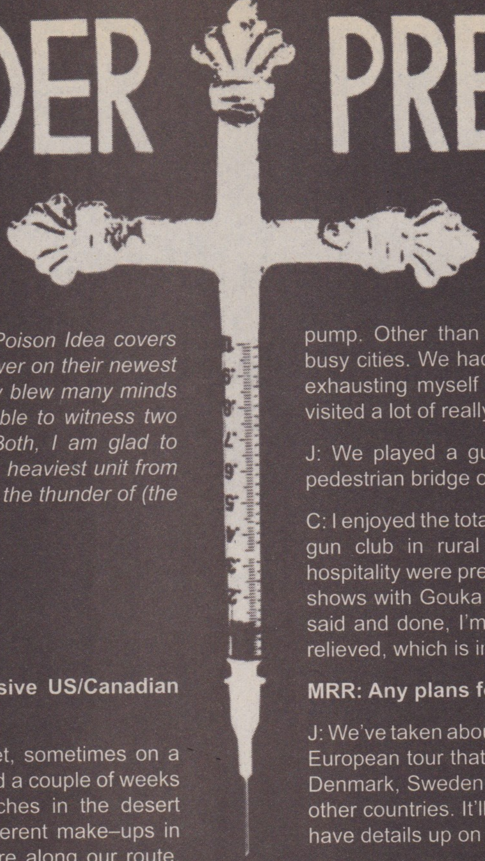


born against

go!

from the vaults...

UNDER PRESSURE



Hey punk! Ever wonder what Bastard playing Poison Idea covers would sound like? Under Pressure has the answer on their newest EP. They just finished a US tour and most likely blew many minds along the way. Your humble interviewer was able to witness two sets by these titans of the northern tundra. Both, I am glad to report, left audiences shocked and awed by the heaviest unit from Canada since Alpha Flight. Prepare to go under the thunder of (the providence of) Manitoba! Interview by Gabby.

Cam: vocals/lyrics

Dan: drums

Jason: bass

MRR: You recently went on a pretty extensive US/Canadian tour. Any highlights/low lights? Surprises?

J: I loved the extremes in diversity that we met, sometimes on a daily basis. We left Winnipeg in a snowstorm and a couple of weeks later we were munching on avocado sandwiches in the desert heat. I thoroughly enjoyed taking in all the different make–ups in geography, topography, architecture, and culture along our route. I think Pittsburgh was my favorite city that we visited. I loved the tired, worn down character of its buildings and how they were tucked into hillsides. Our performance there was very well–received, which certainly doesn't hamper my fondness for the city. My favorite host of the tour has to be Robert from High On Crime. Robert and his wife live in a beautiful old house in Milwaukee. It's a fascinating place to check out; they have a beautifully decorated living room dedicated to Willie Nelson and a bathroom in the basement where guests are to do their #2 business, then photograph the results with a Polaroid camera made handy. It was a surreal experience...to sit down, stare at the tiled floor which read, "shit here" with a helpful arrow pointing back between my legs, and then to look up and be humbled by the display of so many special bowel movements, all thumb–tacked to the wall. Robert took care of us at both ends, offering up lots of delicious food as well.

D: I cut my stomach on a cactus and hurt my wrist tripping over a gas pump. Other than that it was great, I liked the long drives and busy cities. We had a lot of really satisfying shows and it felt good exhausting myself with drumming and moving gear all night. We visited a lot of really interesting places that I'm not soon to forget.

J: We played a guerilla show with Gouka and Signal Lost on a pedestrian bridge overlooking a river in downtown Austin!

C: I enjoyed the totally surreal experience of playing a NRA–affiliated gun club in rural Ohio. Low–level culture shock and extreme hospitality were pretty much the name of the game throughout. Four shows with Gouka was a lot of fun, and humbling too. When all is said and done, I'm actually depressed to be home as opposed to relieved, which is incentive to do a lot more touring with this band.

MRR: Any plans for future touring or taking some time off?

J: We've taken about a month. I'm currently booking a fairly extensive European tour that will take us through the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, and other countries. It'll run from July 20th until August 24th or so. We'll have details up on our website soon.

MRR: You recently had a line up change. Tell us about it...

C: Pat remains a good friend of ours, and it was cool to end his time in the band with an intensive tour that allowed us to get in a lot of playing. He's moving out west and will continue to do his own thing, to be sure, and we'll be back up and playing right away. The new lineup is a solid five–piece with our friends Mike and Joe on guitars, who have both made a lot of great music around Winnipeg. Joe plays guitar in a cool garage rock band called the Hot Live Guys—they've been going for a long time and their live show would wipe the floor with most any band of the same style. Mike also sings in a pure hardcore band called Born Bad, who sounds gloriously gruff, filthy, and fundamentally punk. They gig sporadically but have a great demo available. The change is effective immediately, so next time you catch us on the road you can dig the new sounds for yourself.

MRR: So, you just put out your new EP, which is a bit less blast beat oriented and more straight ahead punishing. How's the response been?

J: I think for the most part, folks are really digging the new songs. That EP was originally supposed to be released on Ugly Pop but the label folded, so I released it on my label, Primitive Air Raid. I'll be handling the vinyl as well, and possibly future Under Pressure recordings.

MRR: Was the change in styles from *Still No Future* to the new EP intentional or just a matter of songs you had sitting in the can for a while waiting to be released?

C: It's been a gradual shift that comes from writing what we want to hear at any given time. I figure that our influences were more or less the same at the time of our inception; we just interpreted them differently. If you check out the 7"s released in the meantime, I think you could chart a more or less linear evolution.

MRR: Word on the street is there's a new album coming soon? What's the story?

C: There is a forthcoming eleven–song LP recorded. There's a bit more variety between the songs, which is important to me, because the endeavor of making a full–length punk record is often a delicate thing these days. We played some of the songs on tour and they seemed to be well received.

MRR: Two of you (Cam and Jason) have a radio show in Winnipeg. Talk a bit about it. You seem to have a pretty diverse playlist.

J: Yeah, Cam and I co–host a radio show called "Radio State." It airs Monday nights on 101.5 UMFM. [http://radiostate.blogspot.com] The show's been on the air since the late '90s and continues to go through many phases in its scope of underground music coverage and mission to discover and challenge the listener. We're all over the place, playing underground garage rock, punk, hardcore, and weirdness from the '50s through present. Lately, I've been playing a lot of art–damaged punk—noisier stuff like Chrome, the Primitive Calculators, Suicide, Pere Ubu... and more tuneful bands like the Fall, Magazine, and early Roxy Music. Speaking of, I've become fascinated with a Nico album titled *The End*, which Roxy Music keyboardist Brian Eno collaborated on along with John Cale. It's so beautiful and haunting; I just can't stop listening to it.

MRR: Speaking of diverse, you guys sure have a pretty intense love of a wide range of music. Your choices in covers (live and recorded) are excellent. Tell us ignoroids some crucial stuff that has a major influence on you and your sound.

C: Most of the music I listen to falls outside the category of hardcore punk, and even that which doesn't is not necessarily identifiable in our sound. Steve Drewitt of the (Newtown) Neurotics' writing represents a pinnacle of sophistication that I can only hope to channel, that really raised the bar for me lyrically. Antiseen are a huge influence for their synthesis of a bunch of influences in a streamlined, consistently punk context. These days I've been listening to a lot of jazz and fusion—for the singer to listen to a lot of instrumental music, there's not a lot that I take away from it to use for Under Pressure on an overt level. Again, it's more about openness being the prerequisite for doing a band in the first place.

D:. The more knowledge and understanding you have of a variety of music, the more options you have when it comes time to write a song. I think we have that. Recently I've been getting more into folk, although I don't think it'll ever really show through in my drumming or songwriting in Under Pressure.

J: The influences that transfer through to our sound are pretty straightforward; Poison Idea, Black Flag, Motörhead, and Japanese hardcore. We play nihilistic, filthy rock'n'roll, and those bands provide no finer example. It's our appreciation of a wide range of music that helps us aspire to write memorable, or at least recognizable songs, rather than allow ourselves to fall into playing to meet a criteria of common traits a certain genre or influence has. Things can easily become formulaic and lifeless if I fall into the trap of emulating. It can be a fine line at times and it's important for me to be self–critical.

MRR: Winnipeg seems very isolated. Maybe that's ignorant to say but what's the scene like up there? Any bands of note beyond the very obvious "G–7" scene?

J: There are the Detentions, who play '70s punk rock'n'roll. Their vocalist Jill has a seriously killer voice. I think they hold their own against any other poppy punk band putting out records these days. Check them out. The Insaniacs have been around for a while now and should be releasing their third album soon. They play snotty early '80s hardcore punk. It's unfortunate that a lot of great or promising bands come and go very quickly in this city. Hopefully more of them will take root and stick it out a bit longer.

D: KEN mode is my favorite Winnipeg band; they play a metallic form of noise rock. They just recorded for a new full length on Escape Artist. I play drums in an instrumental progressive metal band called Electro Quarterstaff, we have a full length coming out this summer on Willowtip.

MRR: So, it sounds like there's a good, eclectic scene up there but, do you feel it's a positive or a negative to be from a part of the world most view as isolated?

C: On one level it fosters a real creativity, probably one of the reasons why the bands are all so distinct. A level of withdrawal from any particular thriving music or social scene, the two usually being interchangeable, makes for interesting music. On the other hand, the geographic isolation makes it hard to sustain a band because the chances of anyone outside of Winnipeg hearing said interesting music are slim.

MRR: I wonder, when I was helping out with some Midwest stuff

for your tour I noticed people seemed to be clueless. Do you think location plays into it?

C: Absolutely. For us even minimal touring is a serious undertaking—any city worth playing is at least eight hours away and there's a increasingly impenetrable border crossing between us and any US dates. Not to overemphasize this point, as there's probably some Siberian punk band shaking their heads right now. We're fortunate to be playing music and every connection we make as a result is tremendously cool. Spoiled scenesters we are not.

J: I'm frustrated by being stranded in Winnipeg but I don't think the punk gods owe us recompense. Since we are not a part of an exploding trend or internationally–recognized music scene, I would like to think that we will never get any more or less attention than what we are rightfully entitled to. Is that odd? I just hate hype. Shitty bands get hyped, great bands get hyped, and hype tends to overshadow the point of it all; individuals getting together to create and express something, then taking it out on the road to see what the road will throw back at them. As things are right now, we can book tours around the world, release our records, and we've been very fortunate in meeting great people in the process. Good enough.

MRR: Similarly, bands you might have seen that are being slept on? (Meaning, bands that aren't getting any attention that are really good that readers should check out)

J: Your band, Tony. Geeze, you could have sought out praise in a less roundabout way, you know. The Bill Bondsmen are a fantastic band, and they have hooks. Yes, one can actually walk away from Bill Bondsmen show and remember their songs, setting them apart from the current wave of punk rock generica.

(Your author submits that this was not a requested plug but thank you very much guys! Back at ya!)

MRR: Folding into your eclectic tastes: best record find on tour?

J: I wish I could brag about something but I was too broke to buy records on tour. I intentionally stayed behind on a few record-shopping expeditions because I would have felt awful stumbling across something I couldn't buy.

MRR: You mentioned culture shock—I haven't been too far into the tundra of our neighbors to the north so I'm a bit naive. Do you really feel there is that much difference between the two nations?

C: Personally, I sense a tangible change in political climate upon crossing the border... More hostility, absurdity. I imagine I'll start to feel the difference less considering the turnout of the most recent election. Expect Stephen Harper's Conservatives to cozy up to your current administration and for their policies to play right into American hands. It was only a matter of time, eh?

J: While Canada has suffered a shift to the right in 2006, it is a nation that still has health care, abortion rights, same–sex marriage, and personal rights and freedoms. We're not a nation with a clean conscience or without significant problems but we are not a warring nation, and certainly not a nation that is so dependent on war and war industry. Canada has its own polarized dynamic but it's not all that comparable to the US. Our nation hasn't been swept by a furor of religious fundamentalism and experienced societal regression. As that somewhat annoying documentary filmmaker said, Canada isn't a nation living under constant violence and fear of each other and the unknown like the US is. There is a four–party system here, not a two–party system, which can occasionally hold governments accountable to opposition, at least to some degree. With this recent election, a separatist Quebec party, a federalist party (who have ruled throughout much of confederacy) and a socialist party are holding the right wing minority government in check.

MRR: There was a discussion we had about the more rigid aspects of the political scene. Talk a bit about it. Where is too far? When is kneejerking ok? Pushing the envelope versus double sealing and enveloping it again and so on.

J: When people's feelings start getting hurt, then we need to ask ourselves to please stop the madness. Kneejerking is fine if you're under 18 years of age. Punk bands should never under any circumstance ever write another song about Ronald Reagan or "The Bomb." Over the next five years songs about "The Police" should be phased out. Political activism should involve community–building as well as informed and open–minded political discussion, never ever touching on wacko conspiracy theories that would make Art Bell shake his head with disbelief. Activism should unite and fight against consciously bad hygiene, hippie cults, and holier–than–thou attitudes. Remember, activism only starts after the band with two vocalists stops alternately barking and growling into the microphone.

MRR: Last words?

J: Who fucks?

JULY

21 – Utrecht, NL
22 – The Hague, NL
23 – Arnhem, NL
24 – Muelheim, DE
25 – Hannover, DE
26 – Hamburg, DE
27 – Lubeck, DE
28 – Copenhagen, DK
29 – Malmö, SE
30 – Gothenburg, SE
31 – Stockholm, SE

AUGUST

1 – off
2 – Umeå, SE
3 – Oulu, FI
4 – Tampere, FI
5 – Turku, FI
6 – Helsinki, FI
7 – off
8 – Rostock or New Brandenburg, DE
9 – Berlin, DE
10 – Potsdam, DE
11 – Roznov, CZ
12 – Uherske Hradiste, CZ
13 – Prague, CZ
14 – Vienna, AU
15 – Venice, IT
16 – Bolzano, IT
17 – Innsbruck, AU
18 – Nurnberg, DE

DISCOGRAPHY:

— *self–titled eight–song CD (2006, Primitive Air–Raid – 12" coming in June)*

— The World's Gourmet – *compilation CD (2005, You Study)*

— *DFA/Under Pressure – split 7" (2004, Flowerviolence)*

— Habits – *EP (2004, Sound Pollution)*

— *Blood I Bleed/Under Pressure – split 7" (2004, Podruido)*

— Still No Future – *12"/CDEP (2003, Sound Pollution)*

UNDER PRESSURE:

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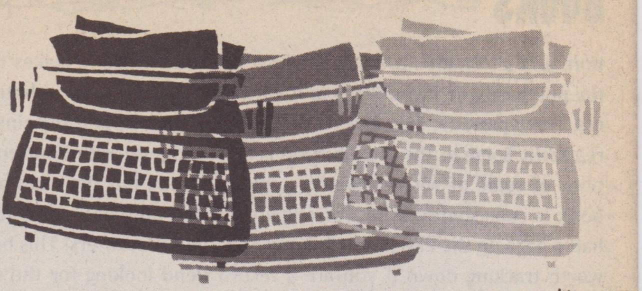
Apt 3 – 431 Stradbrook Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada
R3L 0J7

BOOKS



Kytary A Rev Aneb Co Byloza Zdí:
Punk Rock a Harcore v Ceskoslvovensku Pred Roken 1989
316 Pages — $10 plus postage
Grohava 39
602 00 Brno
Czech Republic
orba@seznam.cz

This is the third print (the first print was released in 2002) of an extensive, Czech language history of the Czech punk scene before 1989. I should first mention that I have absolutely no knowledge of Czech, which made the bulk of this book unreadable and thus un-reviewable for me. What I will review, however, is the pages long English language summary at the end of the book as well as the look and feel of the book itself. As a longtime fan of Eastern European punk, even the brief (ten pages out of over three hundred) English language summary of the early Czech scene was both incredibly interesting and quite informative. This section does an excellent job painting a picture of the difficulties of being a punk rocker in the former Czechoslovakia under the iron fist of Communism (or, more correctly as the book points out, "state Capitalism")—punks and counter-culturalists of all sort had to contend with police repression, censorship, isolation, and the suffocating climate of living in a state that was ruled by an absolutist regime. A reprint in the book of the Czechoslovakia scene report in an '80s *MRR* (written by Lük Haas, who is still one of the foremost supporters of global DIY punk) states that, "Czech punks are very pessimistic, and have nothing to hope for in this country where anyone who goes without a job for more than a month is considered a criminal and put in prison." Lük goes onto write in that scene report that, "The Czechoslovakian state affirms officially that there are no punks in CSSR, but punks exist and continue to survive."

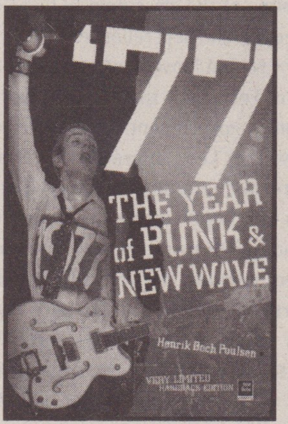
Survive they did, playing illegal shows, making clandestine tapes, and generally existing as an anti-statist force in oppressive, communist Czechoslovakia. The English language section of this book outlines the shift in underground rock trends in the former CSSR, from the influence of the Plastic People of the Universe led scene of the '70s, to the first punk bands, to the wave of the '80s, which saw an increase in "conditioned tolerance" as opposed to the "brutal repression" seen immediately before, to the birth of hardcore. Bands such as Radegast, Energie G, FPB, Visaci Zamek, and many more are given brief but information-packed write-ups. The thoroughness of these write-ups make me wish that I could read the rest of this book!

Aesthetically as well this book is a real treat. There are over a hundred fifty photos, many of which show off the creativity and spark of this early punk scene. With no access to mass-produced product from the West, Czech punks had to create their own style. I stared at the photos in this book for a long, long time, totally inspired and transfixed by characters who thumbed their noses both at state repression and conventional punk rules to invent something radical and exciting. There is also extensive discographical information in this book; while Czech punk bands didn't release almost any vinyl before 1989, there is a lot of information about the myriad tape-only releases that circulated over those years.

One anecdote recounted in the book really stands out to me. An episode of state violence at a Zona A show ends in cops arresting over thirty punks, beating them up, and cutting off their mohawks. This was a very brute attempt at erasing the individual identity of the punks in question, an attempt at "correcting" them in the vision of the state. Despite the indignities that punks suffered at the hand of the oppressive state, they persevered, creating a scene that thrives until this day. This episode is inspiring for punks who may live in similar conditions as well as a strong reminder to those of us living in pockets of privilege that punk rock is foremost a culture of resistance, and should be treated as such rather than just another faddish cult of cool.

This handsome, self-released book, therefore, is essential reading (and viewing) for anyone interested in the global DIY punk community, which is hopefully every reader of *Maximum Rocknroll*. I can only encourage everyone involved with their local and transnational scenes to document those scenes as lovingly as the Czech scene is documented in this book.

—Golnar Nikpour



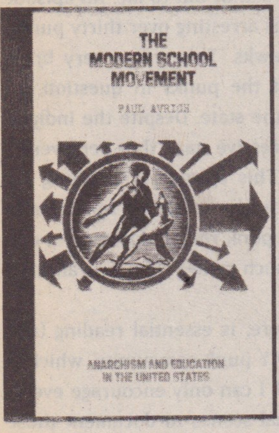
77 The Year of Punk and New Wave
Henrik Bech Poulsen
382 PAGES $30
Helter Skelter Publishing
South Bank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ UK

'76 was the year that punk broke with the first Damned 7", the Sex Pistols on TV and of course the first Ramones LP. But '77 was the year when things really started happening, it was the year of the Clash, the Stiff Little Fingers, X-Ray Spex, Wire, and a million other snot nosed wannabes pogoing into the lime light. This book centers on that little sliver of time on one mean little island. UK 1977. Covering only bands from the UK who released records in '77 Poulsen has been able to narrow the field and get in with a fine-toothed comb. There have been plenty of wishy-washy cash in books about the Pistols or the Clash but none that have given equal weight to the Carpettes, Sham 69, Sick Things, Wasps, Flys, Depressions, etc. The book is organized alphabetically by band and each band has a short historical blurb, an in depth '77 discography and a post '77 history. The coverage is exclusively punk, although there are a few questionable entries of bands who for one reason or another were tarred with the "punk" brush (XTC, Motörhead, etc).

Some bands get no more than a paragraph where as the more prolific bands such as the Jam or the Clash get a bunch of pages. This book is an absolute treat for both the casual punk fan as well as the rabid record collector as the discographies are the most in depth I have seen in any book on this genre, complete with label catalogue numbers, picture sleeve informa-

tion, and alternative pressings. Whilst the content alone makes this a worthy purchase, the layout adds to it with record sleeve scans, photos, and flyers. The typewriter font gives it the feel of a fanzine but it remains clean and readable. Some of the introduction is a little clumsy with Poulsen's descriptions of some of what makes '77 punk stand out, but the main part of this book is consistently solid. I'm certain it is the only book thus far that has half a page on the Psychos or Johnny And The Self Abusers! This book is well worth tracking down if you are a record fiend looking for the second Art Attacks 7" or if you just want to learn about one of the most important years in punk history.

—Tim Brooks



The Modern School Movement
Paul Avrich
434 pages — $21.95
AK Press
674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1163
www.akpress.org

This book is yet another impressively detailed work by Paul Avrich that has been reissued by AK Press. The execution by the Spanish Church and State in 1909 of Francisco Ferrer, a pioneer of modern libertarian education who founded La Escuela Moderna in 1901, sparked a dynamic movement in the United States based on Ferrer's ideas. Education free of coercion, competition, religion, and patriotism was the common goal of the dedicated folks who established modern schools throughout the country between 1910 and 1960. These schools eschewed the traditional rigidity and discipline of the classroom in favor of methods, which fostered individuality, freedom, and self-reliance.

In Part One, the beginning of the Modern School Movement in New York is chronicled. Avrich provides an overview of Ferrer, his theories and work, and his martyrdom at the hands of the Spanish government. The murder of Ferrer inspired outrage internationally as well as keen interest in his ideas about education. In 1910 the Francisco Ferrer Association was founded and the Ferrer School of New York followed in 1911. Avrich traces the history of the Ferrer School through different locations, administrators, and teachers. Avrich is particularly skilled at giving us very personal portraits of the individuals involved in the movement. The Ferrer Center was much more than a school, it was a center of radical activity, offering adult classes and publishing a magazine as well and hosting lectures, entertainment, organizing, and lively debate. The artists and activists who shaped the center and the political climate and events, which influenced it are also comprehensively depicted.

Part Two explores the evolution of the school after circumstances necessitated a move from New York City to Stelton in rural New York in 1915. A colony was established with a focus on the school, and despite difficulties and rather frequent staff turnover, the community grew to nearly 150 people over the course of five years, including students, parents, and staff, and on top of that there were numerous and frequent visitors. The colony also hosted many adult activities. Perhaps the most influential educators of the Ferrer movement, "Aunty" Elizabeth Ferm and "Uncle" Alexis Ferm, directed the school from 1920 to 1925, when they departed due to differences with colonists over their educational approach. While their departure wasn't the only factor in the decline of the Stelton experiment, it was surely a prominent one. Stelton continued and even experienced resurgences, but by many accounts it's peak had passed.

The Mohegan colony, founded in 1923, continued with the same basic principles and many of the same figures as had been involved in New York's Ferrer Center and the school at Stelton. Jim and Nellie Dick were the primary administrators of the first 4 years of the school and employed many of the same methods that the Ferms had at Stelton. They left Mohegan for much the same reasons that the Ferms had left Stelton, primarily what they felt was interference by colonists and lack of support from the board. While the school at Mohegan existed for nearly two decades, and the colony itself another fifteen to twenty years, a number of factors led to it's decline. The aforementioned conflicts with parents, political differences between colonists, the Depression, the increasing disorganization of the Anarchist movement and the assimilation of the children of immigrants, along with gentrification, all took their toll on the colony.

As the Mohegan school closed, new interest in libertarian education was increasing, unaware of the preceding decades of history, effort, and struggle. While each of the experiments that Avrich documents in The Modern School Movement succumbed to pressures both external and internal, the stories he relates are inspiring. These examples of people trying to effect fundamental change in everyday life make me more than a little wistful. While it's easy to romanticize a particular time and place, there were certainly factors, which contributed to the vibrant and active radical communities of the early twentieth century. Avrich's particular skill, to me, is his ability to relate compelling and human stories that convey the personalities of those that otherwise would remain dry footnotes of history. There is an invaluable wealth and depth of information in his books, which makes this book highly recommended, and not only to educators or history buffs or anarchists.

—Tress

Punk '77: An Inside Look at the San Francisco Rock 'n' Roll Scene 1977
James Stark
128 pages — $17.50
Re/Search Publications
20 Romolo #B
San Francisco, CA 94113
www.researchpubs.com

This is the third edition of *Punk '77*, which was originally self-released by it's writer James Stark as something between a fanzine and a self-published book, and which focuses on the early punk scene makers here in San Francisco. Bands like Crime and the Avengers, who remain some of the most electrifying and inspiring in the history of punk get covered at length in the pages of this book. This edition, published by San Francisco counterculture institution Re/Search Publications, is much more extensive than that first, hard to find press; it includes not only the original text, but also a very long, very interesting interview with James Stark by V. Vale, Marian Wallace, and Leslie Hodgkins of Re/Search, a bunch of new photos, and a helpful index.

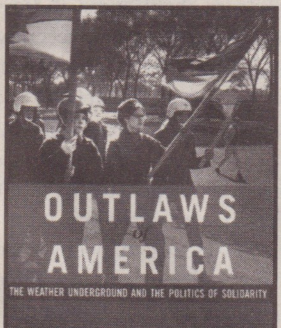
No question, this book is in the essential category for those with even a mild interest in the history of California punk. The photos are worth the price of admission alone—before I even sat down to read *Punk '77*, I flipped through the book several times to check out the amazing shots of the Avengers, the Screamers, UXA, the Nuns, Crime, Flipper, the Germs, the Zeros, and many, many more. The Germs and the Screamers are not from SF, you say? Well, while this book focuses (and provides oral history) on the San Francisco scene, there are tons of photos of non-SF bands on their SF stop, including bands like the Sex Pistols and Damned. In a way, this is a minor shortcoming of the book—so much ink has been spilled over the Pistols, et

al that I would've preferred their chapters spend even more time on the formation of the Mabuhay scene and the bands that scene centered around. There are about a zillion books with the words "punk" and "1977" in the title (including another one reviewed in this issue of MRR, even), mostly centering around London and New York, so it's refreshing to have this book focus on a scene that has gotten much less media attention. It seems a waste to have even a single page taken away from Crime to be given to the Pistols, you know? I think this has something to do with when the book was originally published—1992—a time when there were far fewer books about punk at all, let alone the early San Francisco punk scene. In all, this is a small gripe with this fine read, and in the end the photos and stories of non-SF bands were pretty cool.

One more point: *Punk '77* falls in that category of punk critique which lauds the diversity, creativity, and aesthetic of the first punk wave while decrying what was to follow immediately after it—hardcore. Now, I know I am neither going to solve this decades old tension nor have the last word on the matter, but I'd like to put in my two cents. While it's true that the original California punk wave featured more women, artists, diversity, and general counter-cultural mayhem than the more rigid, suburban hardcore scene that would follow, it was also far less successful in creating an international DIY network of bands, zines, and people than it's youthful successor. It's probably safe to say that the first wave had a great deal in common with creative, bohemian cultures through the decades, but there is absolutely no denying the power, longevity, or inspiration of bands like Black Flag and Dead Kennedys. I understand the fierce tribalism of those first wave punx—it probably did feel like their scene was being stolen when punk became the stomping grounds of a bunch of suburban teenagers. I can definitely relate to the sentiments expressed by Jennifer Miro of the Nuns about the boneheaded sexism of some of those hardcore kids. Nonetheless, those suburban teenagers made some of the most incendiary, timeless music in the history of punk, and provided inspiration to fanzines like *MRR* that lasts to this day. Like I said, I can't solve this tension in punk; I did, however, want to mention what side of the fence this book is on.

Regardless, *Punk '77* is nothing short of indispensable. The writing is well-done, the first hand accounts from SF punk icons are priceless, and the book itself looks great. The interview with James Stark sheds further light on the writer himself, and on life in late '70s San Francisco—Re/Search did a great job to include that. I recommend this book this without any hesitation.

—Golnar Nikpour



Outlaws of America:
The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity
Dan Berger
432 pages — $20
AK Press
674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612-1163
www.akpress.org

Every now and then, on my way home from class, when I feel like meandering a bit, or taking the long way, I pass by 18 West 11th Street. Nestled in the middle of the block between 5th and 6th Avenues, it stands out from all the other houses in the row: brick giants, marked with the chips and cracks of age and faded from exposure to the elements, some perhaps erected even before the recognized statehood of my native California. Creating a vivid contrast, the bricks of Number 18 remain dark brown and smooth, as if laid weeks before. Its front window juts out at a harsh diagonal angle, interrupting the two-dimensional geometry of the other buildings. Smiling stuffed animals, displayed proudly in the window, beam at passers-by.

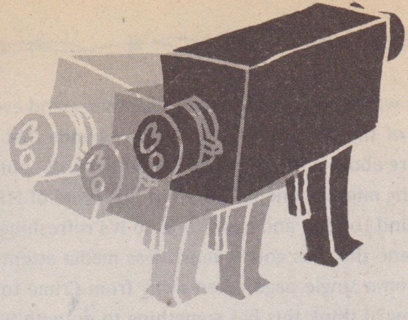
The brownstone currently lodged at 18 West 11th Street, New York, was built to replace one accidentally blown up by revolutionary organization the Weather Underground on March 6, 1970. In an epoch often characterized by an unbridled desire for modernity, impressive constructions, like the new brownstone, can overwrite the legacies of such protest movements, molding them into unrecognizable forms. Dan Berger's *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* boldly reasserts the task of leftist critical history, providing new opportunities for analysis of the lasting lessons of one of the more enduring and public American clandestine organizations. Operating under the assumption that "a mythology of the Sixties is unhelpful, even detrimental, to any attempts at understanding what happened, let alone to forging progressive movement strategy today," Berger exhaustively sets forward the history and development of what became known as the Weather Underground Organization (WUO), going back to the movement's roots in the splintering of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and carrying on through the current activities of its most prominent members. Throughout his narrative, Berger engages with the group's rhetoric, illuminating most lucidly their contributions as an all-white movement of anti-racist solidarity with people of color and other revolutionary groups organized around national liberation. What makes Berger's book so important is the specific and sustained attention this issue receives; much of the popular debate surrounding groups like Weather (including the recent documentary) tends to focus more on the relative merits (or lack thereof) of violent property destruction, and while Berger touches on this, his main focus lies in their relative effectiveness as a statement of solidarity in a fight against global racism and American imperialism.

The book itself is a brisk read, with the events presented in roughly chronological order, interspersed with Berger's strong critical voice consistently pointing out areas in which the group succeeded and failed. As a story, the author uses the life of David Gilbert, a former Weather member currently serving a life sentence for an armed robbery gone wrong, to both bookend the narrative and give it a constant sense of readerly forward motion. Occasionally this tactic backfires, necessitating that Berger flash too far forward or backward in time in a given sitting to sustain narrative cohesion, but on the whole it keeps the history grounded in a sense of the involvement and life story of an individual Weather member. Conversely, while the tactic provides an excellent sense of Gilbert's personality and character, stoked by an obvious admiration of the author for his subject, other members tend to exist only as names and deeds instead of as living, breathing actors. There is a sense that Berger anticipated both of these problems, having included appendices providing a strict chronology of events and further biographical summaries on individuals, but the issues still afflict the main body of the text. Once you get into its rhythm and used to its vocabulary (the inevitable litany of abbreviations come to signify various political organizations of the time) *Outlaws* reads like good history should: rigorous enough to add to the discourse, journalistic enough to add some personality.

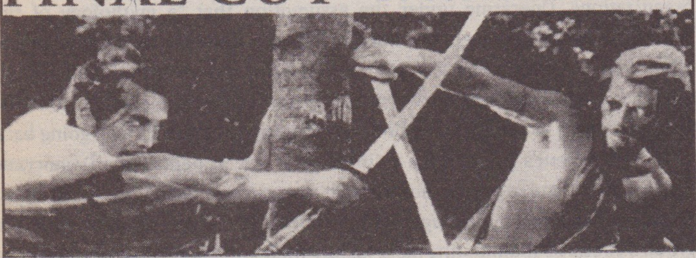
While recommended to anyone interested in both the subject matter and the current state of progressive politics, particularly given Berger's willingness to tangle with and contradict the dominant leftist view of the 1960s presented by figures like former SDS-er Todd Gitlin, one should perhaps approach the book with a wary critical eye. The imagery and rhetoric of the Sixties' protest movements remain so omnipresent, especially within the punk scene, that the book cannot help but contribute to the kind of "mythology" Berger so fervently hopes to avoid. With that in mind, perhaps the practical critical engagement, begun so diligently by the author, can continue on the part of the reader.

—Max Tremblay

MOVIES



FINAL CUT BY STEVEN SPINALI



It costs fifty bucks to see a baseball game—not counting bratwurst and beer. These days, movies (and TV) are emerging as the only entertainment that average people can afford on a regular basis. Now, even movie prices are edging up...and that's the kind of thing that leads to temptation.

So, if you can see a movie for free, why pay at all?

Right now, there are any number of creative ways to see movies without paying for a ticket. As a result, even corporations with the deepest of pockets are complaining about their dwindling profit margins. (Not profits, mind you.) The problem is exacerbated by Hollywood's history of creative accounting practices that turn income into a kind of pecuniary "dark matter." The legal wrangling of the Recording Industry Association of Company—the ones pushing legal proceedings—is less than convincing.

Fact is, so-called "piracy" had been going on long before Bow Wow Wow even wrote a song about it. Now, file sharing is so easy and pervasive that I'd be surprised if most grammar school kids couldn't rip an MP3 or a Hollywood movie.

You can download video files off Usenet, but that's risky for computer security. Many file-sharers have opted for user-friendly options like KaZaa and Limewire. In fact, traffic from KaZaa was so brisk that it was the target of scores of lawsuits, and Limewire has been forced to post warnings to computer users who might want to use the technology to download copyrighted material.

The most clever and efficient approach is to use to use a relatively new protocol called the BitTorrent. In fact, it's so well designed that Warner Brothers recently set up an agreement to sell movies and TV shows via torrents. The program is particularly well suited for large data files like movies. In most cases, torrents will contain audio-video files with free content like subtitles, making it possible to enjoy come cult foreign films that otherwise wouldn't be appealing. This is file-sharing in its purest form—an investment of hours of tedious encoding and synching with no financial gain.

The remarkable thing about BitTorrent is that the more people who are in the torrent, the faster the download—just the opposite of what you might think. You can find torrent boards all over the web, and several have been forced to relocate their servers overseas to avoid the specter of legal action. Nearly all rely on contributions to keep their servers going.

In one sense, it's a war of words. The RIAA calls file-sharing "piracy"—a vivid term that brings to mind outlaws riding rat-infested ships on the high seas. In reality, this is a fairly broad term, because in corporate lingo, anyone who transgresses a copyright law is a de facto pirate. On the other hand, the opposing side likes using terms like "file-sharing." It, too, is an over-broad term created to make it seem less seedy and more like a community (which in fact it often is).

All the same, I can't say I endorse downloading unauthorized movies. It's not a matter of morality, and certainly not out of sympathy for film corporations. It's just that downloaded movies, by and large, are poorly encoded with grainy video, and frequently in a format that's watchable only on your computer. It has all the glamour and excitement of watching a grainy, monaural print in a second-run movie theater.

You also lose the audience element, which can make even a mediocre film more palatable. With a great movie, there's that unbeatable sense of bonding with fellow film-lovers that watching a 700MB file on your computer can't equal. Fact is, computers weren't designed for watching movies (despite what owners of an iPod Video might hope). Downloaded movies are an unsatisfactory compromise, even under the best of conditions.

Of course, it's impossible for the RIAA to enforce its copyrights as aggressively as it wants to. Maybe this basic understanding might shift industry efforts away from costly litigation to a smarter option: more intelligent marketing. What if a movie or MP3 were available in a much more attractive, convenient form? (The iTunes online store is a great example of that.) What if distributors were to enhance an item's rarity or collectability? What if a product were so clearly superior that file-sharing would be an unattractive option?

And how about promoting the one unassailable advantage of film: the pleasure of experiencing a film in a theater with a live audience, big screen and all?

There are, however, some movies too small to promote. In the months to come, it's certain that film-lovers learn about one such fearlessly remarkable and obscure film, **Executive Koala**, which recently received its festival release. Director Minoru Kawasaki (whose debut, **Kalamari Wrestler**, has risen to uber-cult status) is one beneficiary of the BitTorrent phenomenon—a film seen only in a few regional film festivals or a fan-subbed version online.

There's little doubt that the same thing will happen to his latest venture. **Executive Koala** tells the story of a Japanese salaryman, a tireless office manager for a Tokyo pickle company. He also happens to be a human-size koala bear in a business suit. It's endlessly amusing to see him using his oversized paws to press the tiny keys on his cell phone, or trying to use a calculator. Most of his fellow office-workers, however, don't seem surprised that one of their colleagues is a wild animal in a business suit that talks.

The koala is noted for his ambition, sharp thinking, and extreme hairiness. Although he he's quite a natty dresser (for a koala), the office girls are split in their opinion.

"Too much hair," one grimaces. Another office girl wistfully confesses that he kind of turns her on. The girls don't give much thought to the fact that he's a different species.

Despite an enthusiastic presentation, the koala's daring idea of edg-

ing into the crowded kimchee market is met with general resistance from the human product managers. But his fortunes change when the company's president—a large, white bunny, also in a business suit—pledges to personally back the project. (This sequence is perhaps the most bizarre jibes at prejudice committed to film.)

The koala has his own little slate of problems. His human wife had died some time back, and he goes to weekly therapy session. But when his latest girlfriend shows up murdered, just about everybody has their suspicions—especially a hard-nosed cop, who takes on the case on his own time. Even the clerk at the local market—a full-size, talking frog—suspects the worst.

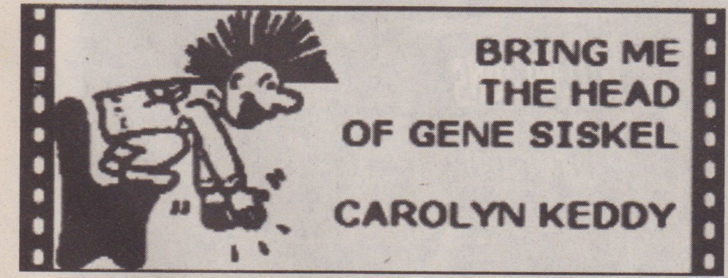
And soon, he has disturbing and violent nightmares that make him doubt his own sanity.

The plot, already strange beyond easy description, turns even more wickedly odd after a jaw-dropping sequences of serial killing, Korean martial arts, and even a short history of the wholesale killing of koalas in Australia.

When **Executive Koala** finished, the voluble woman in back of me said, "Wow." She said it three more times, unable to come up with any way to react to a film so completely skewed in concept and execution. Another guy said, "How do you critique that?" It was a good question, because **Executive Koala** exists in a realm where criticism is irrelevant. **Executive Koala** even flaunts its distaste even for the rules it sets up for itself. But it does play by the rules of pulp filmmaking, and you'll find quotes from enough films to make the final result vaguely familiar.

Produced for the equivalent of $40,000, **Executive Koala** even looks rather cheap at times. It also exhibits a kind of Ed Wood-like fetish for latex-suited people in creature costumes. Japan has stubbornly held onto this tradition from **Godzilla** right through to **Kamen Rider** and the **Power Rangers**, but rarely so oddly. A viewer can be so taken aback that its references to Japan's noted prejudice against the Korean underclass can be lost in the translation. The film is peculiar enough to pique your curiosity, but probably not quite enough to make it a commercial hit (much less pay for English DVD subtitles).

I caught it at the SF International Film Festival. For those unlucky enough to have missed it, there's always the inevitable torrent.



THE ONLY FUTURE YOU CAN COUNT ON IS DEATH

The head honchos at MRR weren't even going to give me the DVD of **Threat** to review. I should have followed their example. Instead, I went home and watched the film. The cover is pretty funny, coming across as a marketing guy's lame attempt at selling a movie to punks. Which of course always makes everyone at MRR laugh. "Makes *Kids* look like an after school special," *URB* magazine screams on the cover. Alright guys, settle down.

I tell you, I really want to like **Threat**. It was made by a bunch of amateurs in their late teens and early 20s. They do seem sincere at discussing all the important topics they want to cram into their film; responsibilities, tolerance, loyalty, rebellion, nihilism, anger, defense, offense. I remember how naïve I was back in my youth, so I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. The filmmakers even went to Sundance uninvited and showed their film in a shoe store. It has all the signs of a DIY production.

Threat's cast of characters is a diverse if clichéd group. Jim, the main character, is a homeless, straight edge kid who works at a comic book store. His friend and co-worker Fred is a married man with a daughter who is also a conspiracy theorist. Fred reads on the subway and gets harassed by gangstas because of it. Mekky is a goth high school student who is a sex addict and has HIV. She doesn't care about spreading it because no one in high school worries about getting it. Kat is an attractive bleach blond woman who is constantly being harassed by men at work and on the street. Ruby still lives with his parents and works the door at the club where the straight edge bands play. Desmond is a suburban kid from New Jersey who tries to act tough in front of gang members and also gets caught shoplifting at the comic store. Then there are the straight edge boys who work at a bar and grumble about the drunks.

Throw all these personalities into a small space and there is bound to be some sort of trouble. There is also a lot of expounding on personal philosophies. When one of the straight-edgers is asked why he works in a bar, he replies, "to keep my enemies close."

I guess it wouldn't be so bad if the main character was at least somewhat sympathetic. He doesn't seem to make sense. He has a job and sleeps on the street. He doesn't drink or do drugs. He eats at his friends' parents' houses. He knows the doorman at the show so he doesn't pay. What does he spend his money on? Why bother working? He also starts the film with the line, "the only future you can count on is death." Isn't a nihilist supposed to throw caution to the wind and to fuck him himself up as much as possible? Yet, he is the one in the film who is friendly with different types of people. He is the one person who connects all these opposing types. Then at the end when the shit goes down, he is ready to go off and beat up some yuppies.

None of the characters in **Threat** get beyond being one-dimensional. You can understand where they are coming from, but then they do something so stupid. Kat suspects someone is stalking her. She sees him from her bedroom window and he points a light-pointer at her while she sleeps. That is a creepy position to be in, yet all she does to deter this peeping is hang a bed sheet in her window. Why doesn't she go down to the thrift store and get a cheap, heavy curtain? It is a small thing, but it's so annoying when a character acts so stupidly. Later, she talks about creating a device for a woman to wear so if a man tries to rape her, his dick will be shredded. Then she beats up a man who is harassing her on the street. (www.kingsmob.com)

The **Captain Beefheart Under Review** DVD didn't offer as much fun as the Velvet Underground one I reviewed last month. It is the same set up, an unauthorized history of Captain Beefheart and His Magic Band. Again, the main person you want to hear from—Don Van Vliet—does not participate. Ten members of the Magic Band are interviewed, and although they try to do some wacky set-ups—on the phone while in a tree, at a church pulpit, in a toy truck—to spice up their interviews, their stories just seem dull. So dull, in fact, that when the usually overly annoying music critics pipe in with their thoughts you hardly notice.

All of this is too bad because the music and footage of the band that is shown is so good. There just isn't enough of it. It's nice to know that Captain Beefheart and his Magic Band made so many promo films for their songs, but I would have liked to have seen all of them. The full videos could have been a nice extra for the DVD. Maybe someone can work on that. (http://mvdb2b.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you've made one, send a copy to me c/o MRR, PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. Email me at carolynmrr@juno.com, if you have a film screening in San Francisco. I will go see it.

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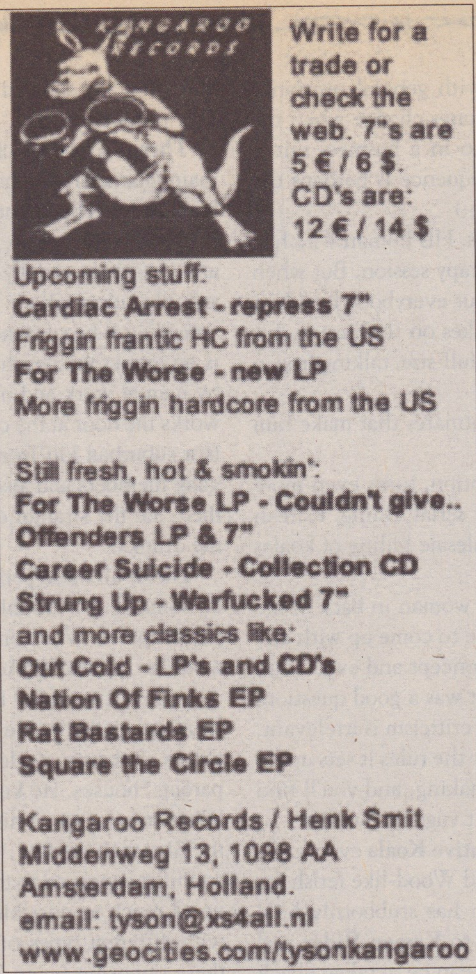
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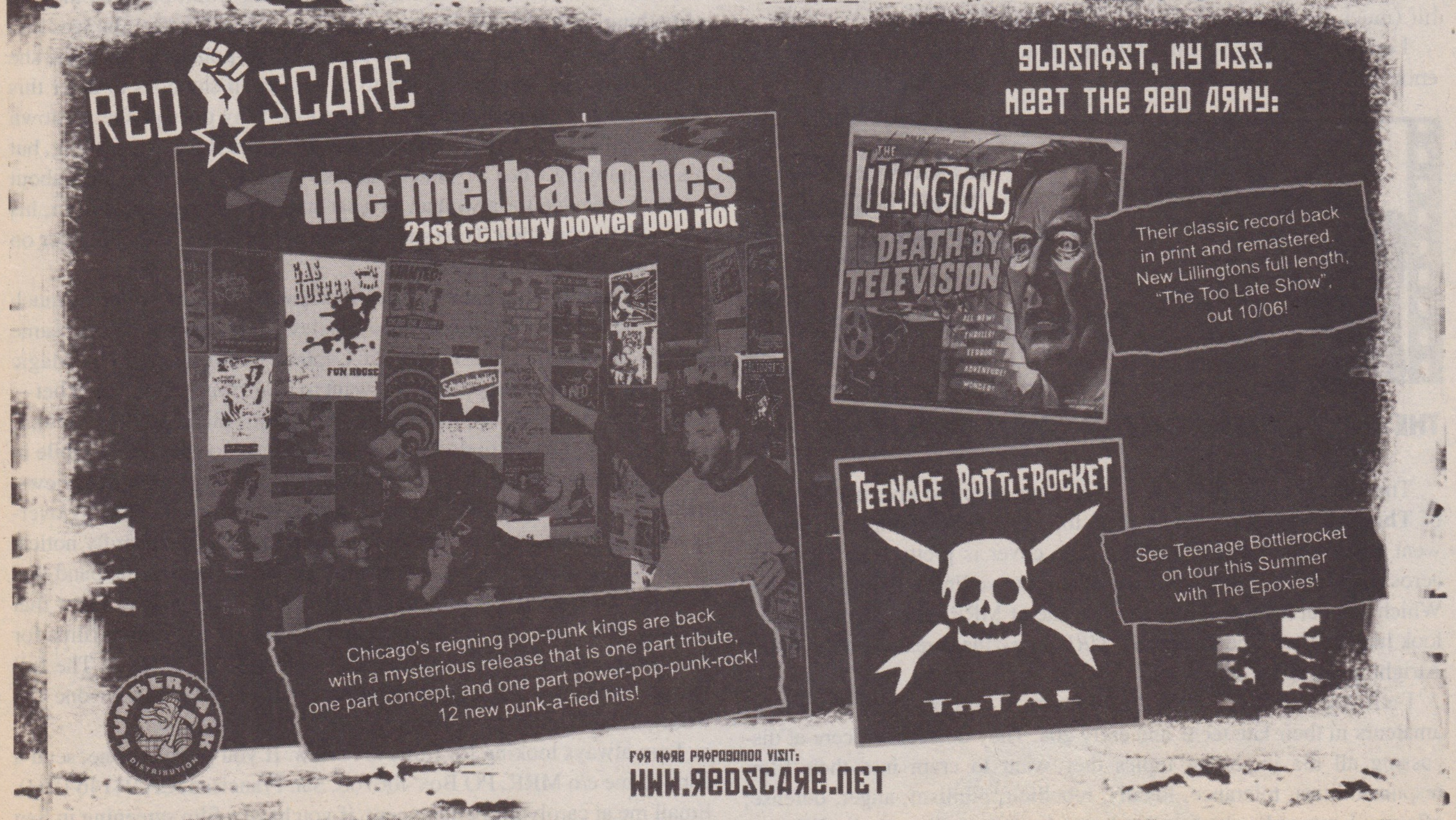
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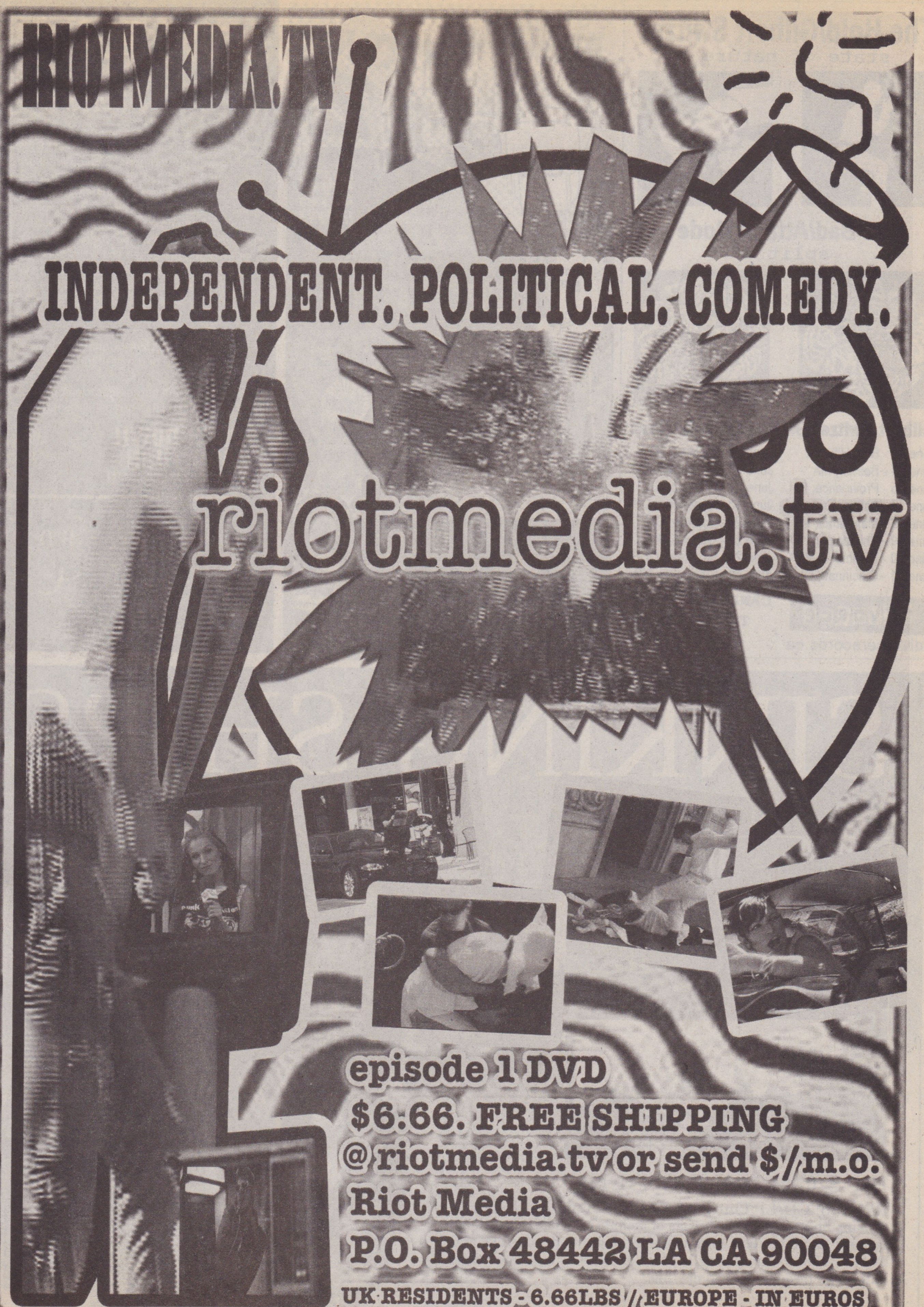
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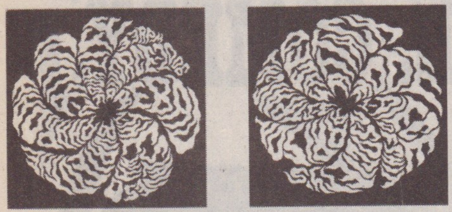

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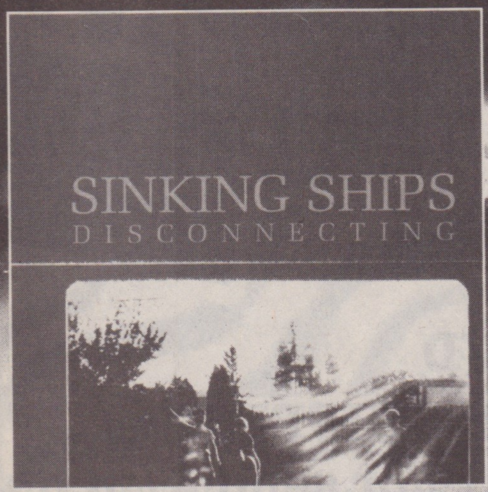

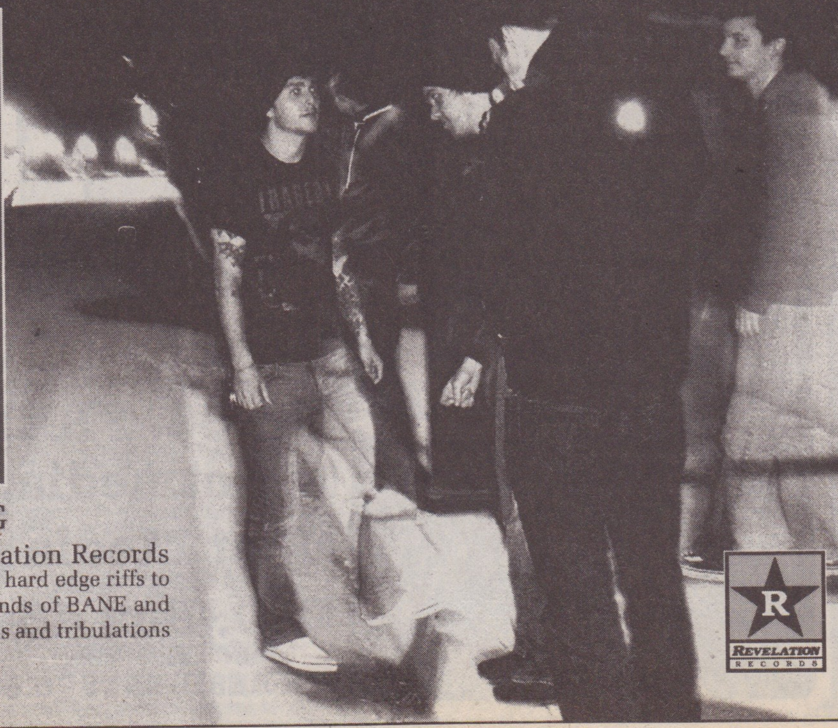

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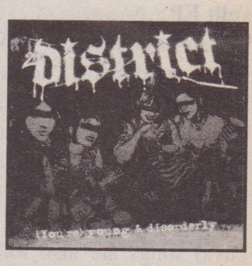
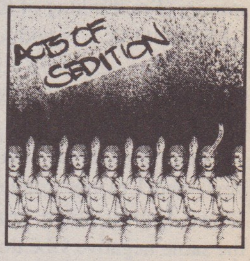
Reviewers: Tim Brooks (TB), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Rob Coons (RC), Carl Cordova (CC), Paul Curran (PC), Andy Darling (AD), Dr. Dante (DD), Sean Dougan (SD), Nic Eagle (NE), Jonathan Floyd (JF), Jeff Heermann (JH), Vince Horner (VH), Layla Gibbon (LG), Chris Hubbard (CS), Kenny Kaos (KK), Carolyn Keddy (CK), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Will Kinser (WK), Elliott Lange (EL), Ray Lujan (RL), Hal MacLean (HM), Allan McNaughton (AM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Bruce Roehrs (BR), Ken Sanderson (KS), Martin Sorrondeguy (MS), Steve Spinali (SS), Brian Stern (BS), Ryan Wells (RW), Shane White (SW).

2nd DISTRICT – "(You're) Young & Disorderly" EP
Female-vocal punk rock that might satisfy a fan of Hellcat and cleaner-sounding Punkcore releases. Otherwise known as nicely produced and played generic Mohawk punk. A good release to browse the Hot Topic website too. (JF)
(Spoodge, www.spoodge.de)



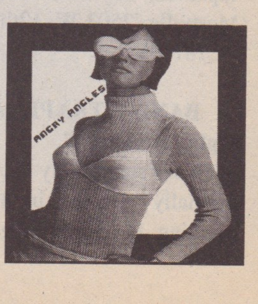
ACROBRATS – "...Going Down Swinging" CD
Decent melodic punk in that '90s East Coast vein, aka WESTON, PLOW UNITED, and DOC HOPPER. Really, this is the type of stuff that was part of the basis of non-offensive and dangerless punk that helped pave the groundwork for the radio friendly and teen movie soundtrack songs of today. In other words, while this is competent and catchy, it is also as safe as they come. (JF)\
(www.theacrobrats.com)

ACTS OF SEDITION – "The Sick Lead the Blind" EP
ACTS OF SEDITION is a Bay Area band that plays a modern style of hardcore—it has its quick parts with some breakdowns and moody moments. The standout track for me is "Knives and Cages." Tight and rapid with loads of punch. Nice color vinyl with a press run of 500. Cool. (MS)
(Spacement, 269 Wonder Street, Reno, NV 89502, www.spacementreno.com)



ADA / CARAVANA ANARQUISTA – split EP
As far as noise-grind bands go, I haven't enjoyed a side of vinyl as much as I did the Philippines' ADA. The great spastically spat out vocals and amazing lyrics screamed in both English and Tagalog are priceless. I'm gonna have to excerpt "Technology Eat My Cock" here: "Computer Sucks! It affects me a lot/Computer Sucks! It controls my life/Surf! Surf! Surf! Fucking surf!/Chat! Chat! Chat! Fucking Chat!/Computer Suck! It suck! It suck/But I love it!" Japan's CARAVANA ANARQUISTA meanwhile are just sheer feedback and noise and nothing to report. ADA puts my heart all aflutter though. (EL)
(PO Box 064, Pacita Complex, San Pedrolaguna, 4023, PHILIPPINES, boiboiboi@yahoo.com)

ANGRY ANGLES – "Apparent Transparent" EP
Listening to this record is like finding a $20 dollar bill tucked away in a drawer or something. Every one of this band's singles has been perfection in my book, like a secret society of raucous youth writing tracts and wrecking rooms... Jay REATARD and Alix of THE LIDS play all instruments and tend to release only super-limited edition singles, which you must seek out because they all have the required surly yet frantic qualities necessary of a good 7". Both ANGRY ANGLES originals on this disc are incredible; "Apparent Transparent" sounds like something that Hyped to Death would unearth on a *Messthetics* comp maybe—bored vocals, killer hooks... *But then* they, uh, take it to the next level so to speak with "You Fell In"—it's like a Ray Harryhausen/'60s B-Movie monster of a song, totally creepy and heroic. My only complaint would be that the WIRE cover on the B-side is kind of unnecessary; they do "The 15th" and remove from it the desolate melancholic quality to make it straight up new wave hitz style. But send off for this already so people have something to dance to/freak out over at the next meeting of your secret society. (LG)
(Plastic Idol, www.plasticidolrecords.com)



ANTI-REGIMEN – "Irun la Ultima Frontera" 10"
This record appears to collect a number of tracks from Basque hardcore punk band ANTI-REGIMEN recorded in 1985. My guess is side A and side B are from two different records as the sound is pretty different. My knowledge of Basque is absolutely zero, so I can't tell you much more about this. It's pretty by-the-numbers thrashy punk—imagine OI POLLOI with a Basque accent—but the package is well put together and it serves as a good document of a band I would otherwise have probably never heard. None of these songs appear on their *Aún Recuerdo* LP which came out in 1990 on Basati Diskak and is more polished and (dare I say?) melodic. Maybe we'll see a reissue of that some day? (AM)
(Beltza, San Juan 9, 2003 Donostia, BASQUE COUNTRY/EUSKAL HERRIA, www.beltzarecords.com)

THE ANXIETIES – "The De-Evolution Will Be Televised" EP
Taking in the ol' school sounds of LA/Orange Country,

whilst still holding onto that distinctive Oregon sound. A nice mix of the WIERDOS and THE BRIEFS with a fine cover of MOTÖRHEAD'S "Going to Brazil" just to throw us off track. A nice little introduction, and hopefully just a taster for more to come. (SD)
(Plastic Idol, www.plasticidolrecords.com)

ARMED SUSPECTS – "Next Stop, New Scene" CD
Good straight-up punk from New York state, few frills and less pretense. ARMED SUSPECTS reminds me of a cross between the PIST and the PINK LINCOLNS. (AD)
(www.armedsuspects.com)

B-BACK / VIV PRINCE EXPERIENCE – split EP
I'm assuming the VIV PRINCE EXPERIENCE tracks don't actually feature ex-PRETTY THINGS Prince, but they kind of sound like something an old ex-madman might muster up: OK folk rock with slightly annoying vocals (probably annoying from trying too hard to not sound Italian). B-BACK (oof! on the name, guys) songs are also folk-rockish, but with a more garagey quality. Also better songs and their vocalist sounds intriguingly odd, so they win this bout. (DD)
(Area Pirata, www.areapirata.com)

BAD RACKETS – "Full-On Blown Apart" CD
In the cutthroat world of entertainment, *appearances* are more important than *substances* (I'm thinking of Kenny Rogers' facelift, GREEN DAY's smudged eyeliner and the whole Tom Cruise/Katie Holmes merger). Thus, while the BAD RACKETS might not really be bad-tempered binge-drinkers with swollen Hate Glands, that's the image they convey—and I'm not gonna question it. *Full-On Blown Apart* is tough, grubby, and possessed of the same negative vibe that made all those early CANDY SNATCHERS or (very early) ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN records so much fun. It's bluesy, it's punky, it doesn't take itself or its audience too seriously. Sure, the sometime-shrill vocals grate at times and some of the three-chord tunes sound a smidge familiar, but I *buy* their whole thing. On Mortville, which is sorta like the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval—buy with confidence. (JH)
(Mortville, 2503 W. 12th St. No. 306, Austin, TX 78703)

LA BANDA TRAPERA DEL RIO – "La Regla / A Cloaca"
This is supposedly the first Spanish punk 7", originally released in 1978. It's pretty raw sounding, but you'd be going out on a limb to call it punk, *especially* by '78. They have the hallmarks of a pub rock act that quickly changed their fashion style to adapt to the coming trend when they sensed the way the wind was blowing. As it is, they play decent, uptempo, bluesy, high-energy rock 'n' roll, with blistering guitar solos over everything. Apparently the original pressing of this commands high prices from collectors, so at least this version will get it into the hands of people who want the music. (AM)
(Munster, www.munster-records.com)

THE BAYONETTES – "Dead End Kids / American Song"
Great 45. This marks number seven in the Art of the Underground Records Singles Series. Two snappy power-pop numbers with great female vocals. "Dead End Kids" is slower and more on the pop end of the spectrum, while the flip ups the pace and the snarl with a political, anti-patriotic bent. Good stuff. One complaint—limited to 250? (AM)
(Art of the Underground, www.artoftheunderground.com)

BEAT BUTTONS – "Red" LP
Gainesville's gone all indie rock. This sounds kind of like THE PONYS, kinda weird, and a little off-key. I'm a little lost on this one—no lyric sheet, no "helpful" press release… Hmmm. It's not bad…but does it rock? Not really. (AD)
(Bakery Outlet, PO Box 4054, St. Augustine, FL 32085, www.bakeryoutletrecords.com)

BENT OUTTA SHAPE / SNUGGLE – split EP
Sadly, what we may have here is BENT OUTTA SHAPE's final work. Yes it is true, the boys from Brooklyn have decided to call it a day. If this is indeed their final message to the world, BENT OUTTA SHAPE delivers us a mixed bag. The first track is mostly filler that may work live but falls flat on record. The second and third songs on their side, however, speak volumes on why so many have found inspiration in BENT OUTTA SHAPE's music. BENT OUTTA SHAPE plays fast-loose punk rock that borrows heavily on the Lookout catalogue of the early '90s mixed with the Recess Records of today. Farewell guys, you will be missed. Now when it comes to SNUGGLE, I must admit I am biased. After all, it was a decade ago that I would simultaneously yell at Jerome to keep it down while instructing him that he needed a pop punk band to go along with APEFACE. Well, years later SNUGGLE is with us and it they remind me of how much talent that some people have. Playing a FIFTEEN-esque style without the baggage, SNUGGLE delivers. A great release. (JF)
(1-2-3-4 Go!, 2928 Telegraph Ave #3, Oakland, CA 94609, www.1234gorecords.com)

BETWEEN THE WARS – "Less We Believe" CD
Sturdy New Jersey metalcore from members of THURSDAY(?) and ENSIGN, dominated by guitar noodling that almost functions completely independent or parallel to the chugga–chugga hardcore underneath it (*a la*—though not as ridiculous—as the non-stop soloing on SSD's *How We Rock*). While carrying more melodic elements above the downbeat and supplying the technical guitar tab edge of this style, I'd prefer it integrated into the more organic all-out fury that the band occasionally drops between the segmented, chorus, chunk–a–chunk downbeat, but I'm more for circle pits than windmill kicks. Harshly shouted lyrics alternate between personal frustration and bleak political outlook. (KS)
(Think Fast, 20230 Calice Ct Unit 402, Estero, FL 33928 www.thinkfastrecords.com)

DIE BILANZ – "Ramba Zamba" CD
German ska sing-alongs. The pace is slow, the guitar is strummed upward, the production is crisp, and I don't understand the language. The photos of each member's ass on the back cover don't help. Nothing for me here. (CK)
(Plastic Bomb, Postfach 100 205, 47002 Duisburg, GERMANY, micha@plastic-bomb.de)

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY W/ LYDIA LUNCH – "Funhouse" LP
You sicko LYDIA LUNCH fiends are gonna be disappointed as there is a hell of a lot more of her on the sleeve of this LP than there actually is on this live album from '82—back-up vocals on a bizarre take on the STOOGES *Funhouse* is all you're gonna get! THE BIRTHDAY PARTY delivers a plodding eleven-song set that is as haunting, disturbing, and fucked up as ever. And the sound quality is better than most of the studio recordings that come through here. (VH)
(boot, no address)

BLACK CHROME – CD
New Zealand rockers offer up ten tracks of dumb, dirty riffs and gruff vocals that formulaically make way for overly catchy and completely ridiculous sing-a-longs like, "My band—whoa-oh—is a front for an internet porn ring," and, "I love my ch-ch-charlie blow." Yeah, a few cuts on here are actually pretty catchy, but this is one of the stupidest CDs I've had to listen to in a while. (VH)
(www.slave.co.nz)

BLACK FLAG – "Licorice Pizza and More" EP
When my time machine is finally complete, I'll have to decide whether to head back first to catch either an early BAD BRAINS gig or a BLACK FLAG show. The EP in question is a strong argument for the latter—it features two intense tracks recorded "live in the studio" at Target Video in 1981 (Hank-era). Fuck, BLACK FLAG *destroys*. Originally these two songs, "Thirsty and Miserable" and "Life of Pain," were released on a limited, give-away single. This bootleg adds an additional demo track (also previously booted) featuring Dez singing "Spray Paint," that lasts all of 30 seconds. Both the sound quality and packaging are a cut above recent FLAG boots (though that ain't sayin' much!); the record also comes with a brief history of the original 7" as well as an extensive interview with the band from 1980. (CS)
(bootleg, no address)

BLANK ITS – "Happy Accidents" CD
Well, I'm actually reviewing the stinking CD but the vinyl is out there, kids. These BLANK ITS ripped off the amazing *Johnny's Tongue* 45 about a year and change ago, so there must be some sort of proportional expectation to make good on that promise. I mean, blowing through 500 or so 45s must generate immense label pressure in 2006, you think? They actually re-write the two tracks from that 45 on this, so there are only seven new tracks to sample, but they are all great drone-y new wave punk with memorably insistent guitars that, while a bit same-y in the tempo department, have enough personality to move some molecules. I hate doing this but I feel lazy today: they sound like a mix of the SPITS and MOTO on this one. That prospect either bores you or makes this a gimmie. (RW)
(Empty, PO Box, 12301, Portland, OR 97212)

BLOOD OF CHRISTIAN CHILDREN – "8 Tracks EP" 12"
Low-fi, raw punk stuff from NY. I like the sloppy delivery here, and the fact that the band only gave us a few tracks per side makes it much more interesting and not over-done. What's with the outro? Some strange made-for-TV movie soundtrack? I hear the Dis-influence in this band and a song even goes as far as having an atomic blast at the end of it. I am such a sucker for bomb blasts on punk songs. Final track on the A-side has an AYS feel to it. Overall, hectic and punk-fucking-rock-sounding shit here. (MS)
(Blood of Christian Children, 36 S. 4th Street Apt. D-2, Brooklyn, NY 11211)

BOMBSHELL ROCKS – "The Conclusion" CD
I haven't listened to these guys for years but this sounds good. Think RANCID and ANTI-FLAG on the retro front. Very tuneful these days with guitars and sing-a-longs. Being from Sweden, I can't but help but hear a little of the great RANDY too. A strong release from these street vets. (RL)
(Sailor's Grave, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612, www.sailorsgraverecords.com)

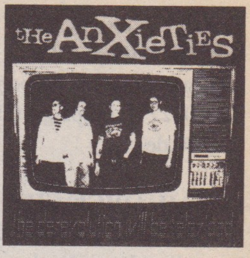
THE BONNIE PARKERS – "The Olive Floating in Your Poisonous Martini" CD
These crafty Italians play some pop-sensible garage-y three-chord punk, and they are bilingual enough to sing and write in English! They defy us reviewers who want to pigeonhole their sound. They vary their eleven tunes with keyboards and styles from 1960s mid-tempo mod to 1990s pop punk. Pretty good shit. (HM)
(Be Nice To Mommy, c/o U. D'Agostino, Via F. De Vico 1, 000162 Rome, ITALY, www.benicetomommy.com)

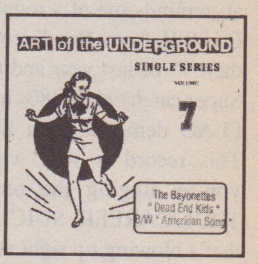
BORN TO LOSE – "Sweet Misery" CD
I was thrown for a loop with the name, ace of spades, and gun imagery…imagining yet another shite bar band. Fortunately I was wrong as this is rockin' hook laden "street-punk." These Texans have the punk element of bands like the STREET DOGS and BRIGGS but back that up with AVAIL/ANN BERETTA melodies and huge gang choruses. The tunes are catchy as hell and the production is huge…pity about the name. These guys are on tour with the US BOMBS right now and are probably blowing them off the stage as I write this. Class. (TB)
(Sailor's Grave, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612, www.sailorsgraverecords.com)

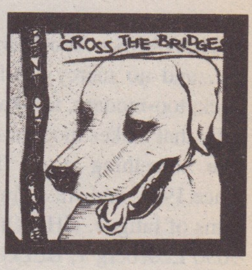
BRAIN HANDLE – "Out of Touch" EP
Good mid-paced hardcore punk not unlike something from the *Boston Not LA* comp. The drums are mixed low, which detracts from some of the overall energy. The songs "The Dilemma" and "Out of Touch" would have been better had they been played faster. Personally, you've got to write a damn catchy hardcore song for me to pay attention if you're sacrificing speed for a more plodding approach. This is not too say that these guys aren't good at what they do, but faster is definitely better in BRAIN HANDLE's case. (CC)
(Brain Handle, PO Box 10223, Pittsburgh, PA 15232)

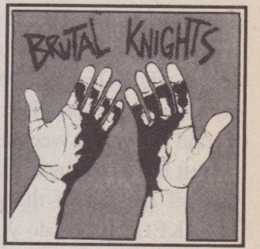
BRUTAL KNIGHTS – "Terrible Evenings" EP
BRUTAL KNIGHTS serve up some hi-energy up-tempo three-chord punk on this new EP. Five songs' worth of fuzz, distortion, and nonsensical lyrics, including a GG ALLIN cover. This record seems to lean a bit more towards the hardcore end of the spectrum in relation to their previous stuff, but I suspect that's just 'cause it's faster and tighter. Either way, I dig it. (CS)
(P. Trash, Dornbuschweg 10, 33649 Bielefeld, GERMANY, www.ptrashrecords.com)

BURIAL YEAR – "Pestilence" LP
Gadzooks man, this is way better than what I last heard from this band. Still a relatively new band, and probably mostly unknown to the rest of the world, this San Francisco metalcore outfit's been tearing it up this past year or so and improving by leaps and bounds. I can't think of anyone to compare this too—the guitarists have a unique slinky-riff style, the drums have gotten a lot tighter with plenty of nice touches of double-kick, and the singer's howl steers the ship. The production's real nice too—plenty heavy but still loose and raw. Everyone knows a good metalcore band's rare as a two-toed chick-









en that can kiss its kness and call you Shirley—don't pass it up. (EL)
(Adagio 830, c/o Robert Schulze, Scheffelstr. 38, 04277, Leipzig, GERMANY, www.adagio830.de)

B.U.S.H. / DICK CHENEY – split EP

Nice band name concept! DICK CHENEY from Sweden kick down some early-'80s US sounds that those Scandinavians seem so good at; reminds me of a rougher DS-13. Good shit. B.U.S.H from Brazil got under my skin with their 7" of last year and this more of the same. Super catchy early '80s hardcore like a BLACK FLAG demo or even SF's BAD POSTURE. This record is well worth tracking down if you're digging the recent DIRECT CONTROL/CAREER SUICIDE early-'80s revival that's blowing up right now. (TB)
(Coughing Up, 9276 S Myrtle Ave, Tempe, AZ 85284)

CARAVANS – "No Mercy" CD

...and no mercy shall ye receive! It's too-slick, too-modern, too-Fat Wreckords "psycho" billy that makes modern-day METEORS sound like something *good*. They've been around since 1983, and are definitely displaying symptoms of fatigue. (JH) (Drunkabilly, Postbus 87, 9050 Ledeberg 1, BELGIUM, www.drunkabilly.com)

CARBONAS – "Cold Waste" LP

Because our very own bespectacled vinyl assigner Mitch Tardwell put this out and because I wanted to prove there was no in-magazine nepotism here at the MRR compound, I was ready to pan this turd. (That coupled with the fact that old four-eyes assured me this would be in my year-end top ten.) Damn you, Cardwell…damn you, CARBONAS. Best record of the year so far…there I said it. Fuck. This record will become a punk rock benchmark—trust me. They take the flailing, out of control fucked-up-ness of the REATARDS but add a whole heap of MARKED MEN-styled hooks and chops. The needle hit the table 'round my yard a week ago and this fucker hasn't left the table since. I dare any band to knock this off the top of the pile (do you hear me, MARKED MEN…do you hear me?). Oh, did I mention that the cover is awesome too? Mandatory purchase. (TB)
(Raw Deluxe, PO Box 23882, Oakland, CA 94623)

CASEY JONES – "The Messenger" CD

The Messenger pretty much picks up where the last full-length left off with an interesting blend of melodic metalcore that uses a lot of octave chord progressions over heavier NYHC-style mosh parts. In other words, this is amazing-core at its most heinous. Their only saving grace is that they don't take themselves too seriously. With song titles like "Coke Bongs and Sing-a-longs" and "1 Out of 3 Has an STD," I am hoping that this kitschy Florida band is in on their own joke. Not bad if this is your kind of thing. (CC)
(Eulogy, www.eulogyrecords.com)

CASINO 66 – "Deliver Light" CD

These guys have a rock 'n' roll power-pop thing going on, falling somewhere around the early REPLACEMENTS and the PLIMSOULS. In modern day terms, maybe TSAR. This CD features five good tunes from this Swedish combo. (RL)
(Dead Vibrations Industry, www.deadvibrations.com)

CHEAP THRILLS / NERVOUS HABITS – split EP

CHEAP THRILLS deliver two lo-fi, old-school-style punk numbers, at least one of which seems to be a cover. If it is a cover, it's obscure enough that most won't recognize it. (It's a great trick to find a great old punk song that never got the recognition it deserved and then cover it. Then, when you play it live, everybody thinks it's your song.) NERVOUS HABITS play a similar, basic, lo-fi style and at the same high quality of the flip side. I have to say I'd never heard of either of these bands, but they both rock. Good shit. (KK)
(Terminal City, no address)

CHINESE LUNGS – "Get Your Lungs Out!" EP

Takes some derring-do (or else numbskulled lameness) to commit a CHUCK BERRY cover to vinyl in this day and age, but CHINESE LUNGS actually manage to do a fresh take on "Come On." A tad of rawk as well as garage seasoning, but not enough to weigh it down as it barrels merrily along, and the singer has an appealing nasal snarling. The two originals on the B-side are even better: kind of DEVILS DOGS-ish but snottier and less polished. I guess the tribute/parody cover trend is officially back, but at least the CHINESE LUNGS' take on the ROLLING STONES is actually amusing (to me, at least). (DD)
(Squoodge, www.squoodge.de)

CIGARETTES – "Gimme Cigarettes / Oh! Oh! Oh!"

…..wow, what a strange single!!!!! Not to be confused with the many other bands that have gone by the same name over the years, the band we're dealing with here is from Southern California (fuck yeah)!!!!!!!! This odd little record is a re-ish of an old single that came out on Moxie Records back in '78 but was apparently recorded some time in '75 or '76...!!! These guys were certainly into SPARKS, no doubt about it!!!! Fans of the MUMPS, DISHES, POINTED STICKS, TWINKEEZ, and KLAUS NOMI take notice……..I'm stoned right now while I review this and it sounds pretty fucking *good*!!!!! All I need now is a little "BJ" and I'll be on my way….!!!!! P.S. Philo Cramer from the notorious FEAR is not only the guitar player of this band but he's also the *LEAD SINGER!!!!!!!* Check it out!!!! (SW)
(S-S, www.s-srecords.com)

CHEVEU – "Dog / Make My Day"

Wow. What can I say about this? At first digital note, I am thinking, "ugh, another annoying 'new wave' band." Then the guitar riff kicks in and the punky garage-ness of it clashes and melds nicely with the drum machine. The vocals casually go about their business in a Mark E. Smith, Billy Childish, or COUNTRY TEASERS rambling sort of way. Then I am hooked. Nice. The B-side has less of an emphasis on the drum machine and a bit of a keyboard, but the guitar riff is catchy and the vocalist sounds like Tommy Strange. Very cool. (CK)
(S-S, 1114 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, www.s-srecords.com)

CONVERSIONS / WITCHES WITH DICKS – split 7"

You know sometimes you see a name like WITCHES WITH DICKS and you just keep walking? You laugh and you're curious but you keep walking. WITCHES kids...I'm sorry I kept walking. I honestly meant to listen to your demo but it got lost in the pileup. Thankfully I got this 7" for review…and I'm never going to just walk on by again. WITCHES are smack dab in the middle of my soft spot for bands with hilarious fat dudes in them. So we're looking at somewhere between DILLINGER FOUR and TILTWHEEL, if you like them band comparison deals. The CONVERSIONS on the other side are lady-fronted spastic punk with a touch of hardcore and lyrics that aren't book-length and still worth reading. There's something rotten in Allston and it's the stench of bands that need to tour the West Coast! Get out here and let RE:Gen air out. Apparently there are only 300 of these so get you some while you can. (ST)
(It's Not a Phase Dad, 2 Hano St., Allson, MA 02134)

COP ON FIRE / VISIONS OF WAR – split CD

VISIONS OF WAR start this disc with relentless, unhinged, full-bore crust. So well played, without being overkill or teetering into the metal domain, that I'm left a bit awe-struck, and the production is live sounding and dirty, as it should be. COP ON FIRE plays ferocious d-beat-inspired punk not unlike WOLFBRIGADE, TRAGEDY, or the throngs of other proficient bands that are doing this right now—and they do it right as well, sticking formulaically to the well-paved path of DISCHARGE-beat pioneers, with unbridled intensity and good, solid musicianship. VISION OF WAR leaves much more of an immediate and lasting impression, but both bands on this disc are great; look for the vinyl of this on Profane Existence. Good stuff. (BS)
(Angry, www.angelfire.com/ne/angry)

CRIMINAL DAMAGE – "The Power of Fools" LP

Ok, so about three reviews ago I said I'd heard the best record of the year so far? Scratch that...*this* is the best record of the year so far. This is full-blown hairs-on-the-back-of-the-neck stuff—I almost had to breathe into a paper bag on first listen I was so blown away. Take one hardcore scene celeb, team him up with a bunch of Portland no-marks and lock them away with nothing but BLITZ and BUSINESS records to listen to. The result is the record that BLITZ's *Voice of a Generation* should have been. Every song is killer and almost all are up to BLITZ's *Warriors* and *New Age* 7"s, which have been a couple of my favorite records for the last 20 years. I'm looking forward to 20 years of listening out of this record. Amazing. (TB)
(Feral Ward, www.feralward.com)

CROSS EXAMINATION – "The Hung Jury" CD

This St. Louis band rips through some seriously fast crossover thrash, which is definitely influenced by bands like MUNICIPAL WASTE (and a bunch of old-school outfits like SUICIDAL TENDENCIES). In fact they do two well-done covers of SUICIDAL TENDENCIES and S.O.D. songs. Plus this CD contains their demo from 2004. Entertaining, if metallic thrash is your thing. (RC)
(Organized Crime, PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513, www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

CUT-UPS – "Paris Street in Ruins" CD

If this release had a little bit more frantic energy I think I would really be ready to ride high on the CUT-UPS bandwagon. As the CUT-UPS are, they sound like a cross between the late '80s punk of LEATHERFACE and SNUFF mixed with stylings of the BOUNCING SOULS. Since I happen to be a fan of all those bands, the CUT-UPS satisfy me, even if this CD is a little subdued.
(All Gone Wrong, www.allgonewrong.com)

DARVOCETS – "Authentic Music from Another Planet" 12"

These conspiracy theorist punk rockers from Cleveland, Ohio bring us six great, KBD-style tunes about cattle mutilations and alien abductions. The vocalist has a very distinct, spastic delivery not unlike Geza X from the DEADBEATS. Aside from the beefier guitar tone, the DARVOCETS could have fit nicely on the Dangerhouse roster. This one-sided, UFO-themed, hand screened 12" is limited to 533 copies, so get yours before the reptoids get you. (CC)
(Painkiller, www.painkillerrecords.com)

DEATHCYCLE – " Suicide Seeds" CD

Thirteen seriously great, devastating tracks from this Long Island band that have the directness and similar metallic crunch of BEHIND ENEMY LINES or a less overtly crusty NAUSEA. A tough, in–your-face attack with metal flourishes, rampant tough riffing, pummeling downbeat lurch, and slashing all-out thrash, all mounted on a rock-solid chassis of sturdy, even-keel, straight up hardcore punk. Varied and powerful vocals that push the lyrics with their clarity and harshness, complemented by a confident band that deftly changes styles and angles of attack. Expertly recorded with totally burly, defiant, on-point lyrics that question religion, punk, and the current political situation. Killer! Killer! (KS)
(Chainsaw Safety, PO Box 260318, Bellerose, NY 11426 www.chainsawsafetyrecords.com)

DEADFALL – "Keep Telling Yourself It's Okay" EP

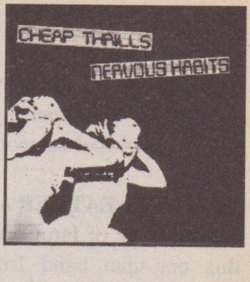
You circle-pitting motherfuckers are gonna break a sweat on this one… DEADFALL gets into allowing surf punk and offbeat stuff into their fast, manic HC—nice touch. Side B starts off with a really cool slowed-down instrumental track with a great guitar part. Sounds almost like it's from a soundtrack. Great! They follow it up with a rapid-fire thrashy one, and the EP wraps up with a cool track that almost reminds me of early MDC! (MS)
(Tankcrimes, PO Box 3495, Oakland, CA 94609, www.tankcrimes.com)

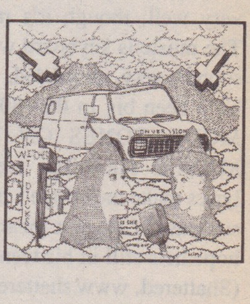
DEATHCHARGE – "The Hangman / New Dark Age"

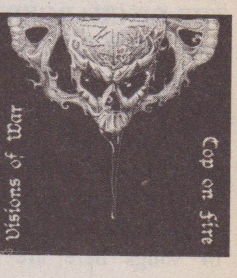
This is, I believe, DEATHCHARGE's third 7", though it's been a while since we last heard from these gloomy PDX punkers. In the years between their last EP and this one, their sound and aesthetic has shifted, though their intent remains much the same. Where on their previous outings DEATHCHARGE were rocking a pretty much straight DISCHARGE vibe (duh), this EP sees them taking on a darker, more mid-paced, almost death rock sound. Actually, I hear a lot of ANTISECT in this, which is cool because I can't think of many bands playing in this particular style. Of the two songs, "The Hangman" is the real monster—what a great fucking song. The art looks cool (though if the music wasn't so killer the picture on the sleeve might've been corny; instead it seems really fitting) and the songs are memorable—I'm way into it. (GN)
(Whispers in Darkness, PO Box 40113, Portland, OR 97240)

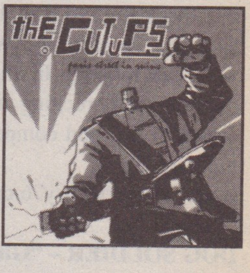
DES-KONTROL – "Jarraituko Dugo" EP

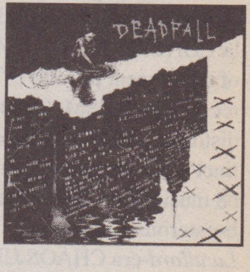
Four tracks of mid-to-up-tempo political street punk from these Basque skinheads. The lyrics are in their native tongue but I presume it's all about pride in their province, dislike for the Spanish state, and their love for the *Real Sociedad* football club (…I wonder if they root for Spain

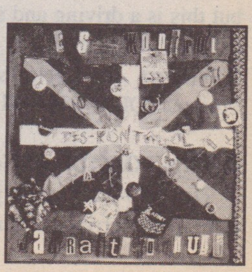












during the World Cup.) Anyway—it's good stuff, and interesting to hear a band from this particular part of the world. (AD)
(Beltza, C/ San Juan 9, 20003 Donostia EH, SPAIN, www.beltzarecords.com)

DIGITAL LEATHER – "Monologue" LP

The spirit of Ian Curtis is alive and well in this one-man band from Arizona—at least vocally. He's got the deep monotone style down very well, though it's missing the inflection. The music is keyboard with drum machine and sounds very outmoded. This probably would have been big in the '80s with the DEPECHE MODE, TONES ON TAIL, and BLANCMANGE fans. The teenage-girl's-diary-type lyrics make me cringe a bit: "Why must the season pass? / Does it mean that nothing lasts?" I hope he's still in his teens. (CK)
(Shattered, www.shatteredrecords.net)

THE DISCHARGERS – "There's No Place Like Hell" CD

First off, it should be mentioned that this band contains the singer from HELLBASTARD. And now that I have your attention, it should also be mentioned that this band is pretty much a DISCHARGE rip-off. Of course I mean that in the kindest way possible, since the 14 songs here are actually pretty good. Punishing distortion, rough growling vocals, and of course some anti-war lyrics. Oh yeah, and there are two actual DISCHARGE covers here just in case you weren't sure who they were worshipping. In all seriousness, I thought this was pretty rocking and worth a listen if you dream of Cal and company while you sleep at night. (RC)
(Fury 76, www.fury76.com)

DOG SOLDIER – "Ghosts" EP

The two songs on the A–side are reminiscent of '80s UK experimentation with raw metallic guitar riffs over quirky, extended thrash tunes (a la CONCRETE SOX, SACRILEGE) and some of the nascent primitive '80s Japanese punk live recordings (GISM, GHOUL, etc), where heavy, distorted, harshly barked vocals stood in distinct separation from compressed, rawly recorded music. Two B–side cuts gain melody a la the boisterous moments of later *Cider Up Landlord*-era CHAOS UK. Maybe that makes it sound like more godhead than the actual results, but this is a driving and solid EP of raw, political punk. Choice. (KS)
(Whispers in Darkness, PO Box 40113, Portland, OR 97240–0113)

DOWN TO KILL – "Never Safe" CD

Down-to-earth punk played with force and bite, if not terribly original. DTK make up for this by keeping things simple, punk, and steady. Songs like "A Pig Is a Pig" and "Plug In and Begin" could fit easily on a mix with THE FREEZE, later POISON IDEA, and STRYCHNINE. (BS)
(Lude Boy, 6100 Edinger Ave #822, Huntington Beach, CA 92647, www.ludeboyrecords.com)

DRAW BLOOD – "Rowdyism" EP

Tortured hardcore from Boston, kinda like SUICIDE FILE or a way more 'core REACH FOR THE SKY. If you are digging the hardcore that brushes screamo then this isn't half bad. (TB)
(Teenage Disco Bloodbath, www.tdbrecords.com)

LOS DRYHEAVERS / THIRTY3 – split EP

THIRTY3 almost lose their voices screaming these four blistering tracks. They have heavily-syncopated, minor chord-heavy, guitar-driven punk along the lines of FUGAZI or HOT WATER MUSIC. LOS DRYHEAVERS deliver a solitary offering entitled "The Death of Rock 'n' Roll," full of punk-rock-n-roll energy much like GLUCIFER. The back-up vocals have plenty of verve and brilliance with their "alright motherfucker" responses! Hells Yea! I'll take LOS DRYHEAVERS and the colored vinyl. In fact, all 600 copies come on colored vinyl! Check it! (HM)
(Koi, 18600 S. Parkview #1836, Houston, TX 77084, www.koirecords.com)

THE DUCKY BOYS – " The War Back Home" CD

I've given these blue-collar stiffs the ol' punk rock cold shoulder since their formation. Wrongly, I had these cats pinned for some weak and tired Irish wannabes, peddling greened-up punk rock in the vain of the awful DROPKICK MURPHYS. It's good to be proven wrong. Soaked in that old Americana sound—solid, true, and to the point—with hints of STEVE EARL and SPRINGSTEEN giving it a rougher SOCIAL DISTORTION feel. A liberal sprinkling of anthems and hooks and those tearing-at-the-heartstring moments with lyrics that'll empty the tissue box, all brought together by those gruff, sandpapered vocals. (SD)
(Sailor's Grave, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612, www.sailorsgraverecords.com)

EJECTORS – "Hydrohead" LP

Most well-known for their psych-tinged *Bloodstains*-comped masterpiece "Hydrohead," Texas punks the EJECTORS get full reissue treatment here courtesy of the very much on-a-roll Italian archivists at Rave Up Records. Of course, "Hydrohead" is here, as is the B-side of that single ("Little Johnny," a plaintive but still punky jam I've put on many a mix-tape). Most of note, however, is the inclusion of a never before released LP, which, according the liner notes, has languished until now at the bottom of someone's closet for the last twenty or so years. This new stuff is fucking great; classic sounding punk rock with an apparent pop sensibility, though admittedly it doesn't have the same heavy sound of "Hydrohead." Often, with reissue LPs of classic KBD/Bloodstains-type bands, we find that the comped track is pretty much the only truly great song the band had in them, but not so with the EJECTORS. This LP is pretty much all killer no filler. Get on it. (GN)
(Rave Up, Via Crispolti 16, 00159 Rome, ITALY, www.raveuprecords.com)

EXITHIPPIES / TANTRUM – split EP

Eardrum-exploding high-end attack from TANTRUM out of Japan. Fucking Christ, the singer has some really scratchy vokillz. The music is fast but it's neither grind nor thrash—more teetering in between the two as the drums don't go beyond a fast beat. EXITHIPPIES have three songs, two of which are techno; the one song that isn't dance music is so blown out, all you can hear is drums and vocals. *Rad.* (NE)
(Distort, PO Box 3400, Wallington, NJ 07057)

FASE QUATTRO / TONI CRIMINE – split EP

A little EP all sung in Spanish, so these dudes could be singing about their love for the third fucking Reich for all I know. If it ain't work related Spanish then boy am I lost. Only one track by FASE QUATTRO, a little '60s inspired ding–a–long, rough and ready, with a great driving harmonica piece thrown in to make this one a winner. Side two, two tracks more in a straight up punk rock vain, with a bit of that trailer park trucker rock thing, that's all the rage. (SD)
(Area Pirata, www.areapirata.com)

FINAL PRAYER – 'Right Here, Right Now" CD

Ten tracks from Germany with "hold on I'll spot you" oppressively heavy riffs, chunky, lumbering breakdowns, precision segmented pneumatic drill drumming, gang choruses, throaty vocals, and decent lyrics that attack politicians, the drudgery of work, and keeping an upbeat mental attitude. No fault, well-done, plug'n'play testosterone-driven mosh-metal-core that hits all the notes for fans of the genre, but gets me as excited as thumbing an issue of *Muscle and Fitness*. Drop and give me twenty! Yawn. No thanks. (KS)
(Let It Burn, Erzgiessereistrasse 51, 80335 Munich, GERMANY, letitburnrecords.com)

FIRST PUNIC WAR – "Unicorn" EP

Sometimes a one man band—I have no idea if there's a full band on this recording—this Des Moines, Iowa outfit is an amorphous creature. The song "Unicorn" sounds like there is a full band and this is the standout track on this recording, the rest of the songs sound like filler on a BECK recording. "Unicorn" plays like a lost SCRATCH ACID demo song, plodding bass and sparse single note guitar, with strained vocals. Now I really want to hear Rey Washam's drumming and SCRATCH ACID. Yes. (BS)
(Carthage vs Rome, PO Box 41162, Des Moines, IA 50311)

FIVE SHOT – "American Idle" CD

A self-released CD by this five-piece, female-fronted street/hardcore band. They forego lyric sheets for *a lot* of photos of themselves with friends and well-wishers, which I admit always gets me scouring the pics for band t-shirts and bad tattoos, though there's nothing too noteworthy in this batch. I guess at times this band kinda-sorta reminds me of NAKED AGGRESSION (and that is me being *generous)*, but mostly their weird quasi-rapped parts and almost non-existent song-writing skill just reminds me that I meant to make a sandwich before I started in on these reviews… (GN)
(Five Shot, fiveshotlimit@yahoo.com)

FM BATS – "Bats Are Out to Harm" EP

Steady, driving, soulful rock with solid swagger, snot drenched vocal stylings and haunted guitar leads over occasionally raucous rhythm parts reminiscent of the FALL (*Beggar's Banquet*-era) or the CRAMPS. Look forward to seeing more from these folks. (BS)
(Sound Virus, www.sound-virus.com)

FORCED MARCH – "Take Immediate Action" CD

Fast, political hardcore from Portland, OR that keeps the volume up and the hammer down the whole way through. Their straightforward, no-bullshit approach may be construed as rather generic, but I still enjoyed these thirteen tracks. The extremely gruff vocals compliment the music well. *Take Immediate Action* also includes a fairly rough cover of "Moral Majority" by YOUTH BRIGADE. (RC)
($10 ppd: Forced March, c/o J. Hughes, 2619 NE 6th Place, Portland, OR 97212)

FORMALDEHYDE JUNKIES – "Jesus Christ Vice Grip" EP

Retro hardcore from Minneapolis. The music is a spot on, energetic, rattle-the-cage aping of early '80s hardcore with excellent loose and scratchy guitar bashing, a fast—no, make that faster—attack, and shouted vocals. But with four songs that clock in at only a little over three minutes total this seems too small to leave on the line. What was so great about the classic '80s EPs of this style is the overwhelming insanity of the four to six song blast on one side, followed by a equally intense four to six tracks on the flip. While the music here is ace, half the record equals half the excitement. Also, there's an insert but no lyrics!!! The fury and the sound are here, but where's the substance??? (KS)
(Fashionable Idiots, PO Box 580131 Minneapolis, MN 55458 www.fashionableidiots.com)

FOR THOSE LOST – "This Is Our Fight!" CD

According to their one sheet, these guys are masters of the live stage. It's good they got that going for them, because this full-length is mediocre at best. Take one part SHAI HULUD, one part non-descript metallic hardcore, add a whinier version of Lou from SICK OF IT ALL, and you get FOR THOSE LOST. (CC)
(Engineer, www.engineerrecords.com)

FPO / I OBJECT – split EP

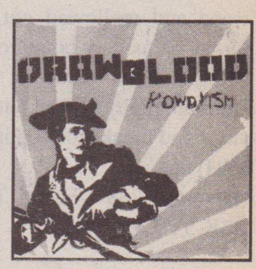
FPO's contribution to this split is a passionate rant against compulsory enlistment, with music that alternates between mid-tempo chug-chugging and faster thrash. Unfortunately, the tune itself isn't as compelling as the vocals and the lyrics, but it still kicks ass. I OBJECT contributes three songs in their signature heavy '80s-influenced hardcore with great female vocals that are more shouted than sung, and lyrics that actually say something important. The packaging on this looks great: nice, thick sleeve with stark red, yellow, and black artwork, and colored vinyl. You need this! (PC)
(Punks Before Profits, www.punksbeforeprofits.net)

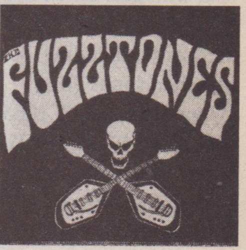
FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS – "The Severed Tongue Speaks for Everyone" LP

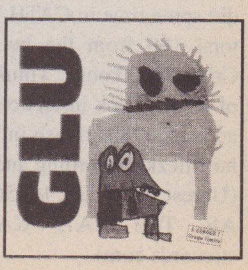
Somehow the original review of this LP, which was supposed to appear an issue or two ago, self-combusted—that's how unpredictable this band is, changing direction at every turn, leaving people wondering what the fuck is going on. Well, let me tell you: FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS are one of those now-time Chicago bands, making arty punk abrasive, dangerous, and for the masses instead of the dilettantish stuff we've come to expect from that dubious genre. The BLACKOUTS started out as something more straightforward, but on this, their second full-length they pretty much just *freak the fuck out* over the course of the entire full-length, like a modern day BUTTHOLE SURFERS or FLIPPER, but less annoying than either of those bands. And unlike those bands, I don't think the BLACKOUTS will ever sound dated, though I guess time will be the judge of that. Get it if not for the music than for the, uh, art, which is even *more* tweeked out that the sounds contained on the vinyl. (GN)
(Criminal IQ, www.criminaliq.com)

THE FUZZTONES – "Bad News Travels Fast / Brand New Man"

A nice reissue of an old single from garage greats THE FUZZTONES. Two of their greatest ever tracks, "Bad News Travels Fast" being the track that was my introduction to Mr. Rudi Protrudi and his gang of assorted long hairs. A no-frills, no-spills, organ driven rocker. Track two was recorded with a live feel—girly screams included—and comes very close to the eerie trash rock of the CRAMPS. If ya didn't get this the first time around—and the original will cost you the down payment on the







house—then pick this up. (SD)
(Munster, www.munster–records.com)

GILBERT SWITZER / THE HOLD – split EP

Canadian three-piece GILBERT SWITZER dishes out three tracks of trashy lo-fi, mid-tempo garage punk. The stripped down guitar/drums/echo-y-vocals sound brings to mind the first HOSPITALS LP if they'd smoked more weed and mellowed out. THE HOLD speed things up as they pound out four tracks of fast, straight-ahead hardcore. The chord progressions are pretty typical but they throw in enough stops and breaks to keep in interesting. Not bad. (VH)
(Divorce, 2687 Fuller Terrace, Halifax, NS B3K 3V9, CANADA)

GLU – "A Genuoux" EP

Wound-up, rhythm oriented, art-damaged rock with a lot of guitar bite and good throaty vocals. This reminds me of BASTARDS "Who Cares?" with a lot more grit and punk influence than most of the Am Rep bands of the '90s that were most known for this type of aggravated post punk sound; this record was originally released in 1996. Good stuff. (BS)
(Rekin, Bruno Lacaussague, 11 rue Ferbos, 33800, Bordeaux, FRANCE)

GOLERS – "South Mountain Style" LP

Goofy but blazing speedy metallic hardcore from this Canadian quartet. Like virtually all Canadian bands, this has super-tight musicianship even while I'm sure they're all gettin' loaded on LaBatt's. Neighbors like POSER DISPOSER and DFA come to mind. They've got a consistent hillbilly theme to this—if you couldn't tell by the cover or album name—with songs about incest and "Inbred Jed," and also more intellectual fare like "Basil," the luckless seal who gets bitten in half by a shark while on a fishing trip. Serious subject matter this is not, seriously shredding hardcore however, this is and then some. (EL)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB T6E 2A7, CANADA)

GOLERS – "2nd Generation" LP

Canada's GOLERS comes *shreddddddding* through this LP with 15 songs. From checking out the website I see that a member of GOLERS did some time in CATHARSIS, but this LP is a total 180 from the political riffing of those Crimethinc kooks. Think more along the lines of a more rock influenced GENOCIDE SS and add some '80s thrash influence, minus the stellar Miezko recording and production. (NE)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

GRUPO SUB-1 / WEBELOS – split EP

I was told that this split EP has a lot of cross-pollination in the membership department, and the fem vox are a definite constant. Both bands feature a genuinely trashy guitar sound and a snarling fuzz attack straight out of the KBD playbook that does a body good in short bursts, which is the only kind of song on here. Only one (tasteful) cover out of eight songs; the rest are snarled/chanted in their native Spanish. This is really good and gets an unqualified recommendation. (RW)
(Blondes Must Die, Apdo de Correos, 68 28529 Rivas Vaciamadrid, Madrid, SPAIN, www.blondesmustdierecords.tk)

HAIL OF RAGE – "All Hail" LP

This is the vinyl version of the full discography of this New England powerviolence band released last year on CD. These guys are about as pissed as it gets—really just an insanely furious delivery. This is classic '90s blasting grind hardcore powerviolence, up there with all the more popular bands that got more props back then. File alongside APARTMENT 213, DROPDEAD, WORD SALAD, DESPISE YOU, and anything else taking out its frustrations with the world via maximum violence. (EL)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

THE HATEPINKS – "Ikea Kitchen (…It's Like a Gas Chamber)" EP

THE HATEPINKS are not just one of the best bands to come out of France in some time, they are one of the best punk bands to come out of anywhere in a long time. The fact that they're from France just makes it that much more remarkable. This is an interesting release for them, mixing in a couple of slower, more new wave-y numbers with their typical upbeat (popish) punk numbers. For me, the experiment pays off. Why don't you pick it up and see if it pays off for you? Very cool packaging, with 3-D photos and the 3-D glasses needed to view them properly. One side at 45 RPM, one at 33 RPM. That's the kind of shit that can just ruin my day. Fuck it. (KK)
(Drunk 'n' Roll, www.drunknroll.de)

HEAVY ARTILLERY / REGBRUN – split EP

Why didn't this record come with a cover? Did the label forget it, or did they not even make one? Regardless, REGBURN starts their side of the EP off with a straight wall of noise for a while and then they go into this mess of short super lo-fi grind songs. Very noisy and very ugly. The HEAVY ARTILLERY side starts off with a lock groove…oh wait this is one of those records that plays from the inside out. Tricky! Anyway, once I figured it out I heard some super fast sXe/skate style hardcore coming out of the speakers. Once again, it was pretty lo-fi, but the HEAVY ARTILLERY side wasn't half bad. I would skip the REGBURN side, but definitely see some potential with HEAVY ARTILLERY. (RC)
(no address)

HELLEPHANT / KILL THE FALL – split CD

I'm a sucker for DANZIG, especially if you mix that up with rocking FU MANCHU/KYUSS jams—which is pretty much what I'm hearing from KILL THE FALL, but these guys still show their punk rock chops so we're not totally spinning into the stoner rock stratosphere. Their half fucking rocks. HELLEPHANT have a long way to go just to get past their horrible name and they never really get off the blocks. Pretty generic East Coast hardcore, heading into tough guy territory but never quite getting there…in fact it never quite gets anywhere. The KILL THE FALL songs rip and they are on the CD first so you can turn it off after song six. (TB)
(Tragic End, tragicend@yahoo.com)

HERMIT PROSE – "Down Beats Sec" split EP

Somebody please explain to me why it seems like only Japanese punk bands can nail that wildly distorted guitar style that sounds like a power drill these days. HERMIT PROSE kills it hard with five tracks of fast, thrashed-out hardcore that makes me think of outfits like DOOM and ENT (and current Japanese bands like DEFECTOR). As the cover of the EP says, "This is howling minded Japanese style." So get this EP before it is gone! (RC)
(Crust War, 1-28-3A, Shikitu-Nishi 2, Naniwa-Ku, Osaka-City, 556-0017 JAPAN)

HEWHOCORRUPTS – " Capitalist Pig" EP

HEWHOCORRUPTS definitely nails it this time with the packaging. The green vinyl record comes in a package with shredded (fake) money and a stock certificate to "HEWHOCORRUPTS Incorporated." This ex-KUNG FU RICK band just fucking kills it with this frenzied grindcore attack. Musically they are all over the place, from fast to slow and then some. But one thing remains constant—the brutal heaviness can't be denied. I would like to see these guys live. (RC)
(no address)

HIGHSCHOOL LOCKERS – "Never Ending Party" CD

The Italians seem to be rivaling the Japanese these days in their ability to master, and impec-

cably reproduce, various Anglo-American rock styles. In this case, it's a pitch-perfect rendition of that whole speedy RAMONES-esque/'60s bubble-gum/'70s power-pop thang. This could be the QUEERS, or the APERS for that matter. Girls, broken hearts, bubblegum, rock 'n' roll, and Rickenbackers are alive and well, and in good hands, in Italy, apparently. (RK)
(Nicotine, www.nicotinerecords.com)

HOLY SHIT! – "Jazz Phase" EP

Track one is dark and nasty in sound—not straightforward in any way. HOLY SHIT! delivers a record that has you wondering what the fuck is gonna come up next, all in a really good way—in other words, not predictable. They get into their hardcore the way we'd come to appreciate on their first EP but only for moments here and there. Again, nasty and noisy. This is a cool ass record. (MS)
(Trigger-on-the-Dutendoo, 308-A Bowen Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901)

HOLLOW GROUND – "Cold Reality" CD

These Canadians plow through six solid tracks of chugga-chugga metal hardcore. The faster, old-school chord progressions and shorter songs remind me a lot of TERROR, while their no-qualms approach of breaking down the breakdown is reminiscent of HATEBREED. Got a merch-guy hat? Fancy yourself the kickboxing type? Then pick this up. (CC)
(Organized Crime, www.organizedcrimerecords.com)

HONOR ROLE – "1982" EP

HONOR ROLE eventually met with some degree of moderate success in the mid/late-'80s as a post-hardcore band; their 1984 *It Bled Like a Stuck Pig* EP, while still punk, shows some other influences creeping into their sound and catches the band at a transitionary period. This material, however—previously released in, uh, 1982 on an obscure split tape with fellow Virginia band GRAVEN IMAGE—is the real fuckin' deal, my friend. It's got all the essential elements of classic '80s American hardcore: suburban angst, catchy riffs played at breakneck speeds, amusingly brief teenage rants against hippies, rednecks, televangelists, and Reagan, and it's nine songs on a 45 rpm 7". Perfect. To me, some of the best hardcore of the day seemed to come out of the Southeast—bands like HONOR ROLE, WHITE CROSS, CORROSION OF CONFORMITY, and so on took a great deal of musical influence from the early hardcore scene (the one in Washington, DC in particular) but added a wilder, more twisted edge to their sound. I dunno, maybe to most folks this might seem like a generic, fourth-rate CIRCLE JERKS rip-off or something, deservingly forgotten by the modern punk masses—but I think No Way Records has unearthed a real gem... (CS)
(No Way, www.deepfrybonanza.com/nowayrecords)

THE HORROR – "The Fear, the Terror, the Horror" LP

When VOORHEES split a few years ago they started up the HORROR. The HORROR has put out a few releases over time and this 18-song full-length is a nice addition to the bunch. 18 songs in just over 21 minutes of shredding, rock solid hardcore with aggressively screamed vocals. Songs like "Conan the Republican" and "Still Hate Thatcher" give you an idea of the politics involved here. And it was nice to see them give a shout out to one of UK's finest punk outfits with "Give Me Boxed In or Give Me Death." Well worth your hard earned pennies! (RC)
(Crime Scene, www.crimescenerecords.co.uk)

I AM LOVED – "I Am Loved" LP

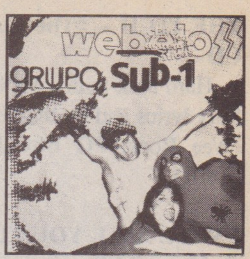
I AM LOVED follows a simple formula: noisy, lo-fi rock-steady punk intro that then smacks into a fast or blast part with an occasional bridge or random verse change, and an "outro" here and there. Some of the faster parts remind me of DISCORDANCE AXIS or NAPALM DEATH. This recording sounds like it was written on the spot—band members say in between songs, "That was a song," and they're right; for the most part, these songs (musically) fucking rip too. I AM LOVED packs a lot of hooks into short songs—brief genre-bending always segues back to a good fast hardcore or grind-influenced shredding part. Could have just as easily been a demo tape, but it's a decent listen for what it is. (BS)
(Trigger-on-the-Dutendoo, 308A Bowen St, Oshkosh, WI 54901)

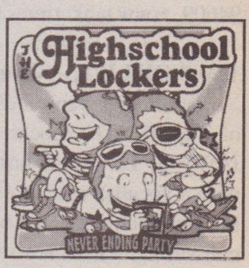
IF I HAD A HI FI / MODERN MACHINES – split CD

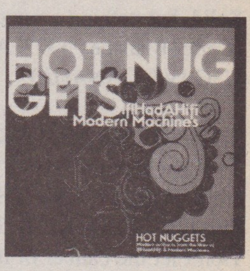
A split CD—one of the lamer release ideas of modern times, but I'm too tired to wave my cane at the scandal of the whole thing, and the nurse hasn't answered the call button in an hour, so fuck it. I'm keeping one eye on *Cops* as I tell you that IF I HAD A HI FI is most entertaining on their GO-GO'S and MISSION OF BURMA covers, which should tell you something right there you little *punks*. The other troop is going by the name MODERN MACHINES; I know they've got a bunch of records out already but this is my first conscious exposure to them, unless they are that pop punk band they are piping though the dialysis room when I get my blood changed out at 3 P.M. They take the high ground on this tiny piece of real estate with a perfectly executed update of the Very Small Records sound. And they do a nice speedy take of RADIO BIRDMAN's "455 SD" just to bring a tear to my crusty eye, a very painful process indeed. They win, they win—so when is C-SPAN gonna get to the Senate hearings on ethanol production alreddy?! (RW)
(Crustacean, PO Box 829, Madison, WI 53701)

ISKARA – "The Terrorist Act" EP

Man, these Canadians are not happy and not quiet about it. Most of the time, these guys sound like they're stuck in a 20-year time warp of mid-'80s thrash metal a la SLAYER and EXODUS, but crust and black metal elements also creep in to round out the anti-American diatribes. Well-informed lyrics and lengthy accompanying essays on the state of intra-continental relations give these guys some serious intent behind the furious vocal delivery. I wouldn't be surprised to see these guys end up on the NSA's next watch list. (EL)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton AB, T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)







THE ITCH – "The Courage to Be Hated" CD

Hard rock with a MISFITS-esque influence. Silly lyrics and by-the-book music. (CK)
(Wee Rock, PO Box 333, Springfield, MO 65801)

I WILL KILL YOU FUCKER – "Educated Guidance" EP

Wack-ass, psychotropic riffage from Oakland master-foilers I WILL KILL YOU FUCKER. Swollen bass and stiff drums spurt with harmonized, sometimes chanting vocals and unique song structures would fit well in any Takashi Miike movie. Toilet training and other original life issues/lessons gleaned with "Educated Guidance" differentiate IWKYF from those other rhythm-oriented bands that merely trace the lines sketched by Japanese visionaries BOREDOMS. (BS)
(Tankcrimes, PO Box 3495, Oakland, CA 94609, www.tankcrimes.com)

JAWS OF LIFE – "Slime Time" EP

Yet another band feeling the lasting effects of the MENTAL/Lockin Out Records fallout. JAWS OF LIFE play fast, mosh-tastic hardcore with a vocalist who takes the strained, screaming approach that I can only take so much of in one sitting. There are some really cool guitar leads in some of these songs, and the lyrics are well thought out and conscious for this genre. Solid, but nothing ground breaking. (CC)
(Carte Blanche, 1373 Argyle, Montreal QC, H3G IV5, CANADA)

JO AND THE MOTHERFUCKERS – CD

What appears to be a "project" band by folks from TOMMY AND THE TERRORS and the DROPKICK MURPHYS, with a female singer. Don't let the caliber of those bands fool you—this is pretty ho hum. Musically, it's one dimensional street punk with above average vocals, but the recording is *horrible;* thin demo quality with guitars sounding like they were recorded in another state. The next release could be a keeper but this should have stayed in demo land. (TB)
(Jo and the Motherfuckers, www.jo234.com)

THE JURY – "I Hate the Future" EP

Straight-forward US hardcore outta Albany, on the Gloom label (though I believe it's co-released by the band themselves). Pretty even split here between mid-tempo and faster material... Altogether it's a fair debut effort with a couple good tracks, though it lacks any particularly distinguishing qualities. The lyrics outline a generally pessimistic, deadpan view on life—to which I can relate (why else would I be into punk?)—but are delivered in the stereotypical monotone scream that for me robs the music of nearly all intensity or nuance. At least the record-release version of this EP is well-packaged, featuring a cool spray-painted cover and "File Under FUCK" sticker (a la RORSCHACH). (CS)
(Gloom/Electric Mayhem, PO Box 14253, Albany, NY 12212, www.gloomrecords.com)

KILL YOUR IDOLS / MODERN LIFE IS WAR – "Live on WLUW" split EP

Joe over at Lifeline has released a split live EP here by two already popular bands. The quality of the recording holds up considering I am not a fan of live stuff, and I was able to get through it. MODERN LIFE IS WAR does a BLACK FLAG cover, all others are originals. Most of you know these bands so no need for descriptions, and I would definitely say it is a record for fans only. (MS)
(Lifeline, PO Box 692, Midlothian, IL 60445, www.lifelinerecords.net)

KITTY AND THE MANGES – EP

There are so many good records coming out nowadays, who has time to listen to generic pop punk? Not me. THE MANGES are, according to Hal who is sitting next to me, an institution of the Italian pop punk scene. On this record they are joined by Kitty Kowalski, who sounds like someone who wishes she were on the *Valley Girl* soundtrack, only her voice is too husky for that; though it has the same drama school plastic quality. She could maybe sing the jingle for one of those garish 80s pink girls world games they used to advertise on TV, "Just like shopping at the mall!" The A-side is a tribute to Joey Ramone. Comes with a poster that you would have to pay me to put on my wall. (LG)
(It's Alive, 11411 Hewes St, Orange, CA 92869)

KNAUGHTY KNIGHTS – "Tommy of the River" EP

So the "powerpop" moves showcased on their Goner EP were no abberation, this is the real deal Lucille. When you've got a record that's as no-doubt-about-it good as this, words are merely fluff drifting from a ruffled cat's back. If you have any use for the Goner-driven tidal wave generated by the varied ex-OBLIVIANS outfits, grab yer board and hit the beach, this is as good as any Memphis 7" from the last five years or so. (RW)
(Shattered, 1352 Faxon Ave, Memphis, TN 38104)

LEATHER UPPERS – "Bright Lights" CD

One of the more unlikely bands to effect a return from the cold, cold '90s are these LEATHER UPPERS. We should be expecting bands like KING KONG or the MAKERS to get back together any day now…oh, the MAKERS are still together? Huh, how about that! Anyhow, Craig and Greg are back as a two-piece (their only other full-length was *Okay, Don't Say Hi*, recorded as a three-piece with the ICKY BOYFRIENDS' A-Tone on skins) and the return to OG playing weight has not sucked any power from their attack. Pinning these guys down is kind of hard; their guitar sound and pounding drums are pure garage rock a la the MONKEES binging wild-eyed on a BLUE CHEER roadie's cheap biker crank, but their soul is firmly planted in '70s non-arena rock moves, which creates a hyper-confounding speed-cheese-rock effect. These guys spend the whole record walking a tightrope between entertaining True Life Schlock and late '90s Lookout-records-style hucksterism, but talent is an invisible guy wire keeping the whole house of cards, uh, afloat (?) so that by the end you are cheering them for succeeding at this most dangerous game. Straight off, the grabbers on here are "My Baby," "Halfway Houseboat," and "Say It in French." These are the riff monsters, the rest are merely really, really good. Definitely a polarizing experience live; in any case you haven't really heard great *rock moderne* until you dig out something by these cats. Start here. (RW)
(Goner, 2152 Young Ave, Memphis, TN 38104)

LA PESTE – "Better Off Dead" LP

.....finally, another vinyl reissue of one of my fave Boston punk bands (keep in mind that most Boston punk bands from that era *kick ass* and are usually on a much higher musical plateau than the others) and I gotta say it's one fine motherfuckin' record!!!! Despite it being on that cheap-ass Italian vinyl it sounds pretty *amazing*!!!! Actually, I think Rave Up is a pretty decent little punk rock re-ish label....I've been pleased with many of their past projects......and this record is the perfect companion to the Matador comp that came out back in '96!!!!!! For those not in the know, LA PESTE was a three-piece outfit that rode in on punk's first wave.....the golden era..!!!! Unfortunately they didn't commit many recordings to vinyl but did seem to record a lot of stuff!!!!!! Their first single "Better Off Dead/Black" on Black Records from '78 is one of my top ten punk singles of all time (and it's here on this collection)!!!!!!!! The band seemed to disappear in the early '80s...maybe the death of their drummer had something to do with their demise, I dunno.....ask Carolyn Keddy, she'll fill you in on the facts......I'm talking outta my ass.....!!!!! Over all, this collection of unreleased and rereleased tracks was a pleasure to review and a

must for the record collector nerd scumbags out there that like a nice package (the cover art is groovy!!!!)!!!!!!!!! If any one is interested in coming over my house and watching the rare LA PESTE videotape that I own lemme know...I'm always down for having my cock sucked while viewing...just write *MRR*, we'll set something up!!!!!!!! (SW)
(Rave Up, Via Crispolti 16 – 00159, Rome, ITALY, www.web.tiscali.itraveup)

LEVOLUME ETAITTAUMAXIMUM – "Radio Maximum" CD

Great catchy pop from France in the TRAVOLTAS and RAMONES vein. Apparently their fifth album! Unless these guys are late bloomers, where are the other four LPs for our pop punk listening pleasure? Fun stuff from this French-tongued group. (RL)
(Disques Anubis, www.disquesanubis.com)

LIMP WRIST – "Want Us Dead" EP

These punk rock fags (minus one) have finally shed the straight edge shackles of self-restraint (minus one) to bring us four tracks of bitchin' NEGATIVE APPROACH-influenced hardcore for the disenchanted queer youth. Their mid-paced songs like "Want Us Dead" and "Just Like You" are great, but the standout for me is definitely the raging fast "What's Gone Wrong?" Has the edge gone dull? Well, yes. But whatever beer-soaked hijinx may have ensued during their hiatus, it still hasn't made a dent in their ability to kick out another awesome EP. Get into it. (CC)
(Cheap Art, PO Box 2101, Philadelphia, PA 19103)

LINE OF FIRE / TEMPERS FLARE – "I'll Take The World" split CD

LINE OF FIRE plays modern metallic hardcore with unusually raw recording values for the style of layered melodic guitar, harsh, caustic, AGNOSTIC FRONT-style vocals, and metallic crunch. Not delivered with the sterile precision normally found in this metalcore style, it comes off a bit livelier than the average band. Their lyrics are political mixed with the standard punchin' stuff angst; they also crank out a REAGAN YOUTH cover that doesn't dress well in metalcore clothes—though, regardless of what you do to it, the guitar line of "New Aryans" still cuts like a knife. TEMPERS FLARE also has a metalcore sound, an even rawer and more primitive recording, and a bit more of a metallic bite, but delivered at times with such a crude, plodding, and slow downbeat, it is sometimes reminiscent of—I dunno—a NOOTHGRUSH or AGENTS OF SATAN record or something. But then you read the gruffly-barked lyrics, which are seemingly thinly-veiled Christian Conspiracy theory/fantasy/idiocy and/or just confused—"Are you one with the Maker? Or one with the Damned?" "I am neck-deep in sin," and "It was all in the scriptures you chose to neglect/You armed the enemy now the mark you'll accept." And well...pass on that like a collection plate. Ugh! (KS)
(True or False, no address)

LOMA PRIETA – "Our LP is Your EP" CDEP

Oh god, more screamy emo dreck. Sorry, this is gonna have to be one of those "not my thing" reviews—problem is, it's tough to find anyone whose thing this is anymore. The best thing about this is the title, cuz it's funny and accurate given the disc's seven-and-a-half-minute length. Unfortunately it feels like it too—hoping and praying for those long four hundred and fifty seconds to be up…(EL)
(Inkblot, www.inkblotrecords.com)

LOVESICK – "Discography" CD

LOVESICK was a Little Rock, Arkansas band that was together from 1997 to 2001. Even though they call this CD a discography it doesn't include all of the band's material, but it does include 33 tracks that span the band's entire existence. They played powerful emo with intricate guitar melodies and driving, cacophonic drumbeats. The vocals are unbearably whiney and out of key, sounding almost like a teenager whose voice is changing. But you could argue that it works for the heartfelt, tortured feeling that they were going for. (PC)
(Harlan, 7205 Geronimo, North Little Rock, AR 72116, www.seemybrotherdance.com)

MARCHING ORDERS – "Last Drinks" CD

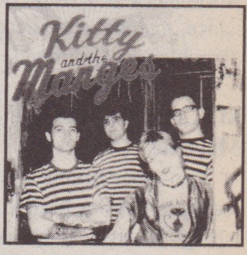
Mebbe it's just 'cos I'm getting old, and a little sensitive in my dotage, but how many Oi songs do we really need about drinking, fighting, and patriotism? C'mon lads, let's think outside the box, just once. Musically, they are mundanely adequate, churning out six tracks of second-rate, mid-tempo 4-SKINS fare. Oi is alive and somewhat breathing in Australia, apparently. (RK)
(droog1460@hotmail.com)

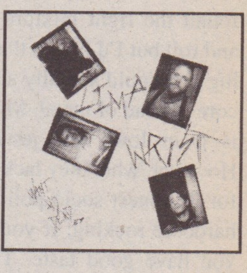
MASSGRAVE – "People Are the Problem" LP

American and Canadian grinding crust lords don't fret, if your DOOM and DISRUPT records are getting to much play and wrecking the grooves buy this new MASSGAVE LP and get piss drunk so you and your toothless friends can slam in yer flea infested living room with your worm ridden dogs. This LP is fucking killer—ripping crusty grind with no frills about it, blown out (in a good way) recording with highs, lows, blast, and d-beats up yer fucking unwashed ass. And always remember: *cops are no fun*! (NE)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

MASS MOVEMENT OF THE MOTH – "Finale" CD

Right off the bat there's a lot of elements of Black Metal in the first song. Fruity electronic harpsichord-esque sounds and typical black metal dude voice, but a remarkable lack of double bass—which is actually refreshing. Those dudes have been riding that double bass wave for way too long. After the first song, Black Metal dude trades off with spazzy hardcore guy over what I'm sure is technically proficient playing and sudden tempo changes, which seem to be mandatory these days. There is no lyric sheet to go along with all this but I assume there's some stuff about zombies and the devil. (ST)
(Alone, PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126, www.alonerecords.com)





MENEGUAR – "I Was Born at Night" CD

Good math rock noise here. This is in the vein of ARCHERS OF LOAF and a more spastic SUPERCHUNK, but what this really reminds of is the underrated, now-defunct local band PEE. I even did some research on this band to see if one of the singers from PEE was among their ranks; its not often you Google a band name and get zero results. Bonus points for originality on the band name front. The world has a new word. Seven songs with dissonance, melody, and energy. (RL)
(Troubleman Unlimited)

MIKAELA'S FIEND – "We Can Driving Machine" CD

Two-piece drums and guitar outfit featuring teenaged cousins born to twin mothers. If "punishing" is a reasonable description of the music you like, please seek this out. Undoubtedly a devastatingly entertaining live proposition, this onslaught of pummeling drum patterns and layer upon layer of noisy guitar effects and tape loops gets tired pretty quickly when enjoyed at home. Taken in short doses, however, this can be mined for moments of excellent excess. (AM)
(SAF, PO Box 1876, Aptos, CA 95001)

MODERN LIFE IS WAR – "Witness" LP

I don't know who put the "bomp" in the "bomp bah bomp bah bomp" or who finally found the right mixture of hardcore and rock and roll but I'd like to thank that dude for showing you could actually add good things to hardcore instead of metal. MODERN LIFE IS WAR is from Iowa and jesus christ they look it. However, what they lack in looks, they make up for in honest socio-political lyrics and hot shit hardcore rocking. If you liked SUICIDE FILE, you have good taste. They even have a song about the RAMONES. What's not to like? (ST)
(Deathwish, www.deathwishinc.com)

MOCKBA – "Cheap Vodka" CD

Caught somewhere between the art damage era of choppy '79 post punk and the blown out garage of right now Chicago comes Buffalo's MOCKBA. Cheap organ effects and cold WIRE-influenced chops all driven with the rocked out energy of the BLOODY HOLLIES. Paranoid punk that keeps trying to hammer that square peg in to the round hole, not giving two flying fucks about cozy little genres and scenes or wanting to be the next cool thing. I can dig. These cats have the cold wave rocked out, instigated their own little punk rock culture clash, and pulled off one this months finest CDs. (SD)
(Nicotine, PO Box 165, 15057 Tortona, ITALY, www.nicotinerecords.com)

MONITORS – " Cunt Fusion" EP

Nice new wave-ish punk rock from Kansas; they had a previous 45 a couple of months back. What is nice about the MONITORS is that they don't stray too much into that early '80s modern alternative rock sound a la DIGITAL LEATHER. This record is four songs of fun that deserve to be heard, so order it from… (JF)
(Spin the Bottle, 1123 W. 11th Street, Bloomington, IN 47404)

LOS MONJES – "Musica de las Esferas" 10"

A good compilation of one of Mexico's weirdest bands of the '60s. I'd never heard LOS MONJES before (my only familiarity being seeing their live LP going for sums too rich for my blood). Jazz-influenced rock and roll (as opposed to that fusion jazz rock stuff) played by a keyboardist, drummer, and bassist (though some guitar and other instruments crop up on a couple of tracks: Mexican rock authority Federico Arana says that it's only one track where the keyboardist plays guitar instead, so I assume it's some session guy on the other song), some of it sufficiently bent enough to warrant comparison with the American/German MONKS. (DD)
(Electro Harmonix, no address)

THEE MONKEY BUTLERS – "Sapperticker Boogie" EP

Rockabilly recorded super lo-fi. The vocals are mixed down low and everything is fuzzed out. One original tune and three covers, including "One Thirty Ape," formerly known as the MISFITS' "We Are 138." Yeah, not as funny as it was when everyone was really drunk that night at practice. (CK)
(Baby Doll, PO Box 1043, Allston, MA 02134, www.babydollrecords.com)

MUGWUMPS – "Slit Your Tire" EP

Good SW-beat from Germany (the SW stands for SCREECHING WEASEL, of course) in the shape of three Bavarians called the MUGWUMPS. Nothing original here, just D.U.M.B. poppy punk rock. It's pretty well played and contains the ample hooks required to pull this shit off. Color me impressed, I love this kinda stuff…speaking of which, with the advent of summer, it's just about time for my annual SW rediscovery. (AD)
(Varmit, www.varmitrecords.com)

MURDER IN MEMPHIS – "Obvious as Whiskey" CD

A six-tracker of somewhat tortured speedy emo/screamo. I've listened to this half a dozen times, and am still rather at a loss as to what they're about. I guess mebbe if you crossed LIFETIME with HOT WATER MUSIC, and stripped them of any catchy tunes, sense, or purpose, you'd, er, get these chaps. But mebbe it's just me... (RK)
(Falcom, www.falcomrecords.com)

NAUGHTY ZOMBIES – "Posesion Zombie" EP

.....what do we have here???? Ah, it's a Spanish 45 GRAVE....but without the same caliber of musicians........!!!!!! This is okay, but the lead singer kinda gets on my tits (even though she does resemble Italian movie icon Edwidge Fenech)......!!!! What can I say......???? It's been done better!!!!!!!! (SW)
(Blondes Must Die, Apdo de Correos, 68 28529 Rivas Vaciamadrid, Madrid, SPAIN, www.blondesmustdierecords.tk)

THE NAZI DOGS – "Money Taker" EP

The newest chunk of evil rock and roll from the notorious Drunk 'n' Roll record company (Germany) starts off with a potent surge of dirty garage nastiness on the title cut "Money Talker." This song is very good! Unfortunately you have to wade through "Pipeline" (the second song of side A), and "Wipe Out" (the first song on side B) before you get to more rock 'n' roll. The second song on side B, "City of Losers," is an unrepentant diatribe steeped in drugs and pussy, which clearly is the NAZI DOGS' true forte. This EP is worth the price of admission if you skip directly from "Money Talker" to "City of Losers." Fuck that weak surf crap! (BR)
(Drunk 'n' Roll, www.drunknroll.de)

NEIN NEIN NEIN – "Deine Szene Ist Ein Zombie" CD

Powerful, thrashy German emo-core, with more "core" than emo. Put JAWBREAKER, youth crew, and melodic Deutschpunk in a blender and you get NEIN NEIN NEIN. At 23 songs, this album drags a lot, even though the songs are really short. It's well-produced and passionately performed but the lack of memorable tunes makes this somewhat…um…forgettable. (PC)
(Plastic Bomb, Postfach 100205, 47002 Duisburg, GERMANY, www.plasticbombrecords.de)

NEON MANIACS / TORCHA SHED – split EP

On this somewhat disconcerting split between two different types of bands, you can select punk or pop. The TORCHA SHED side features British punk recorded in 1999 that falls somewhere between the UK SUBS and GANG

OF FOUR. The subject matter appeals to every punk universally—alcohol and fighting. The band would be a ton-o-fun in a barroom situation. The recording indicates mischievous designs, and a listener would guess that some members of TORCHA SHED actually have been "in the back of a police car." Decent punk rock is the currency here. Side two of this split EP features the NEON MANIACS with some pleasant pop punk and an interesting spate of guitar licks. The music in the song is quirky; the lyrics about zombie-eating human flesh are entertaining. This is an adequate split EP—listenable, but certainly not essential. (BR)
(Puke N Vomit, PO Box 3435, Fullerton, CA 92834)

NEUROTIC SWINGERS – "Sexy & Mysterious" LP
This is fucking great, catchy punk rock, and reminds of the catchy punk that was coming out of Europe in the mid-'80s. It's mid-tempo, it's melodic, and it's well put together. There's nothing left to say, except that you should go buy it. Don't steal it, buy it. (KK)
(Demolition Derby, Nekkerspoetstraat 29, 2800 Mechelen, BELGIUM, www.demderby.com)

NO – "Ciudad Violenta" EP
Basque Country punk from '82. Need I say more? I guess I should because I am supposed to somehow depict in words what records sound like. This is some awesome Spanish punk, kids. The guitars are fuzzed out to the point of distraction, but in a good way; the music is punk as fuck, really catchy and classic sounding. I think it was recorded live, which probably explains the crazy guitar sound. I wish that someone who knew more about Spanish punk had gotten this for review just so they could reference contemporary bands… I would say it's not as insanely catchy as RIP or as crazy sounding as VULPESS; it's kind of more trad-punk, but really cool and worth checking out… The song "Paralitico Total" is killer. (LG)
(Beltza, C/ San Juan 9, 20003 Donostia – EH, SPAIN, www.beltzarecords.com)

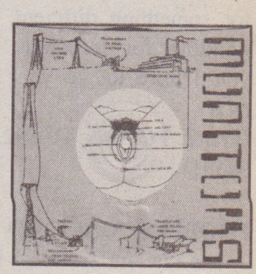
NO SLOGAN – "No Pasaran" EP
Chicago's NO SLOGAN plays straightforward punk rock that reminds me of a lot of '80s bands without sounding too much like anyone in particular. BATTALION OF SAINTS, 7 SECONDS, any number of Boston HC bands, and even JOY DIVISION are given nods, some subtle, some not. It would be unfair to call them purely retro, like a lot of bands around these days. These guys are just rockin' the punk of ages. "No Pasaran" is an anthem of resistance, whereas songs like "Nothing to Lose" and "Smash the Scene" are more cynical. "No more heroes, no more zeros, no more egos," they sing. I agree with the sentiment but I think punk needs heroes and egos as much as it needs cooperation, understanding, and all that. Great, three color, block-print style cover art. (PC)
(A Wrench in the Gears, www.wrenchrecords.com)

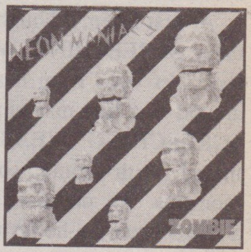
NOFX – "Wolves in Wolves' Clothing" CD
Another solid full-length from these local punk rock heroes. These guys have the BAD RELIGION effect on me. Every release is a good release but they can't quite match that classic third or so album. This is still good stuff and I'm really diggin' certain tracks—"USA-holes" and "Benny Got Blowed Up" to name names. There are some slower songs on this. Worth the price for the chuckles and the riffs. (RL)
(Fat Wreck, www.fatwreck.com)

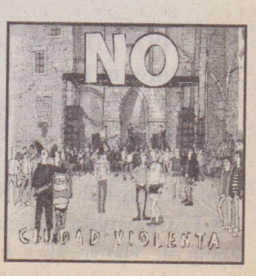
NONE MORE BLACK – "This Is Satire" CD
This Is Satire is the second full length from this combo featuring the singer from KID DYNAMITE. Powerful and tuneful punk that stays on the punk side as opposed to hardcore. Pretty much along the ways of their first LP musically. The first song on this is their best song yet with its emotional vocals. This band could fill a void for some of you depressed JAWBREAKER fans. Very good stuff. (RL)
(Fat Wreck, www.fatwreck.com)

OFFENDERS – "We Must Rebel" LP
The OFFENDERS began in Texas way back in early '78. Their debut full-length, *We Must Rebel*, was released five years later in 1983, at the height of the United States' hardcore explosion. The original LP featured ten breathlessly delivered high speed thrash tunes, with MDC clearly as the main influence (not surprising, considering bassist Mikey Donaldson played in both bands)—unfortunately, the material was not blessed with particularly memorable songwriting or flattering recording quality, and aside from one or two songs, is ultimately forgettable. However, this reissue tacks on five extra tracks recorded in '81 (previously released on both the *Lost Causes* 7" and the *Fight Back* EP) that capture the OFFENDERS at an earlier, more punk period, with original vocalist Mick Buck. This stuff is far more interesting than the tuneless thrash of *We Must Rebel*, proving that faster is not always better. Most notable is a ripping version of their classic "I Hate Myself" that, alongside the track on the *P.E.A.C.E.* compilation, is the OFFENDERS' best song. This reissue also includes an insert with an extensive band history, lyrics, and a wealth of cool photos and flyers. (CS)
(Reflex, www.reflexdistribution.com)

OLD GROWTH – "The Black Hole" LP
Seeing this record cover, I was prepared for the worst. Thankfully, this is not the cheesy country-folk-punk one would expect from a band called OLD GROWTH who poses with their instruments in front of a rolling, hilly landscape. Instead, these three side-burned dudes play sincere, slower-tempo pop-punk that does have an alt-country flavor but is impressive mainly due to the fact that it never crosses the line into the world of the corny, sappy, AGAINST ME!-y, or emo-y. In avoiding all these pitfalls, though, this band plays it a little too safe and fails to bring in enough of its own unique personality. Still, just playing solid, harmonious, un-embarrassing pop-punk, kinda like the MOPES did, is pretty unique and awesome. "Been Here," the odd-song-out, is reminiscent of the RAMONES' Phil Spector recordings, and is the super-duper catchy highlight on this LP. (PC)
(Bakery Outlet, PO Box 4054, St Augustine, FL 32085, www.bakeryoutletrecords.com)







PESD – "Politikarepoizonekurvae" LP

Members of POST REGIMENT and TRAGEDIA offer up an odd fusion of speedy Polish hardcore and '80s industrial/new wave that brings to mind *Land of Rape and Honey*-era MINISTRY and SKINNY PUPPY. This is a US pressing of the LP that was released last year on the Polish label Trujaca Fala. There's about ten minutes of good music on here, but the rest is…uh, interesting. If you're desperate for something different, this is it. If you're fiending for ferocious European hardcore, you'll have to get your fix somewhere else. (VH)
(Prank, PO Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141)

PHOBIA – "Cruel" CD

It's rare for bands to improve as they age, especially past the 15-year mark, but I swear LA's grind masters have never sounded better. *Return to Desolation* and *Means of Existence* are classics, but the band was undeniably in a bit of a slump for a couple years after that. I don't think I've heard anyone come back with such a vengeance though. Last year's *Get Up and Kill* was devastating and this one's right there too. Maybe even better. These guys are fucking killing it—totally fired up and reinvigorated, this album is overdosing on hate, rage, and fury. Hooking up with the machine-like precision of Danny Walker (of UPHILL BATTLE/EXHUMED/INTRONAUT) on drums certainly isn't hurting, but as before, it's the whole band that deserves credit. Burda's never written such killer riffs, Shane's never sounded so pissed, the production's never been heavier, and I've never been so into PHOBIA as I am now with these last couple records. Get this now! (EL)
(Willowtip, www.willowtip.com)

POPSTERS – "All of You" CD

At first listen, I thought that this was kind of tame SCREECHING WEASEL-school punk rock. Yet what I am hearing on a second go around is a fine mix of previously mentioned SCREECHING WEASEL/QUEERS-school, mixed with some solid SUPERCHUNK moments. An unusual combo, but the POPSTERS have the hooks to pull it off. Thumbs up. (JF)
(Incessant Drip, www.incessantdrip.com)

THE POPZILLAS – "The Incredible Adventures of Pandora Pop" CD

Good, slick, poppy punk featuring the gal singer from the BAM BAMS and the guitar player from SWOONS. Musically, these guys kinda sound like BAD RELIGION and FACE TO FACE with a full guitar sound and riffing going on. The vocals are strong with little Euro accent from this Euro combo. Maybe KENICKIE or DARLING BUDS quality. Singing not screaming style. Fans of the gal singer will like this spunky release. Unlisted bonus track of the RAMONES song "Havana Affair" done ballad style too. (RL)
(Wolverine, www.wolverene-records.de)

POSER DISPOSER – "You Don't Count" EP

I don't have words to describe how much I love this band. Their full-length *Waiting to Exhale* was one of my favorite records of last year and this five-song EP is right up there too. Damn near perfect grind here—great production and just fast as all hell. The drumming just destroys from start to finish, but it's the vocals and lyrics that put them over the top—"Asshole Magnet" alone deserves a Pulitzer. Anyone into pure raging grind or just fast thrashing hardcore, you're missing out if you're not hearing this. (EL)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

POSER DISPOSER – "Waiting to Inhale" LP

So I just read that this Canadian three-piece is ex-DFA, who was a good hardcore band in their own right. Regardless, POSER DISPOSER turns up the heat here and cranks out some blistering grindcore. They easily jump from fast metallic hardcore to hammering blast beats in the blink of an eye, while two of the guys pitch in on some gnarly vocals. One of the better full-length grind releases I have heard in a while. (RC)
(Unrest, Suite 239, 10654 82nd Ave, Edmonton, AB T6E 2A7, CANADA, www.unrestrecords.com)

PRÄPARATION H – "Eight Hits from Hell" 3"CD

Two dudes from Columbia and Doug from HELLNATION / BRODY'S MILITIA make up this virtuosic chamber music ensemble schooled in the ways of Beethoven and Mozart. Nah, just kidding. Eight songs in four minutes means the CD is over before I even start writing, but this is pure unbridled noise-grind chaos, lo-fi as all the best of this ilk is. These are from an unreleased "lost" session from '99, so if you're looking to complete your collection of this crazy cult band (they've been around for something like 15 years), you'll definitely want to pick this up. Fans of NOYFB, FINAL EXIT, SORE THROAT and of course, Tchaikovsky, look no further. (EL)
(Discos Don Ramon, www.themightyh.com)

PRETTY BOY THORSON & THE FALLING ANGELS – "I Know I Said I Love You But I Guess I Don't" EP

You know what I like? "Cow-punk" or "alt-country" or whatever makes guys who aren't from the South have slight Southern accents and guys who are from the South have even worse Southern accents. I'm looking at you LUCERO. PRETTY BOY THORSON doesn't get too too in the drawl or musically into "sad bastard" territory which is nice. Lyrically we're on the outskirts of bummer town but still drinking and having a good time with it. I want a full length now but these four songs are going to have to do. (ST)
(The Party's Over, 1821 East Howard, Seattle, WA 98122, www.thepartysoverrecords.com)

THE PUSSY PIRATES / THE TEETH – split EP

In their letter, Ann Arbor's the PUSSY PIRATES described themselves as "jazz-punk"—a phrase that has been known to drive weaker reviewers to head for the exit. I pushed forward though, and didn't really hear any jazz at all. The "jazz" prefix can be attributed to their use of instruments like saxophone and trumpet alongside the traditional guitar, bass, and drums, but listening to their two songs, I was reminded of nothing more than the sounds of (early) DOG FACED HERMANS or possibly ARCHBISHOP KEBAB. Quirky, yes, but definitely punk. There are elements of DELTA 5, etc., in the use of multiple female vocals (with much English accent action) but no funk implied—just straight, full speed ahead punk. On the other side, THE TEETH (sadly no longer a going concern) similarly pursue a direction that would have been more at home in Scotland in 1988. Primarily, they sound a lot like BADGEWEARER, a band they quite possibly never heard, but should seek out. There are also similarities to NOMEANSNO. At any rate, this is a great record and demonstrates that there are people interested in exploring the outer reaches of what punk could mean without losing the plot entirely or just aping the first GANG OF FOUR record. Highly recommended. (AM)
(The Pussy Pirates, www.thepussypirates.com)

PYRAMID SCHEME – "What Will We Do Next?" EP

The Pittsburgh area has been hitting us with some fast and spastic thrash over the last few years and this EP by PYRAMID SCHEME is no exception. The hyper vocalist takes charge of the upbeat thrashy songs that are about not-so serious topics like insomnia and prank calls. I bet these guys jump around a lot and are fun to see live. (RC)
(Art Fraud, www.pyramidscheme.org)

LA QUIETE – "Tenpeun '01–'05" CD

This is a collection of tracks from random split 7"s, along with a couple of unreleased tracks and demos. I'm not sure if LA QUIETE have since broken up, but the CD booklet sort of gives that impression. Hailing from Italy, this band has (obviously) been around for a while, and ploughs the furrow of epic, dynamic progressive hardcore: Long songs, gradual build-ups, and earnest, screamed vocals, not unlike END ON END. There are 19 songs here and if you've been trying to hunt down LA QUIETE's obscure releases or if this sounds like your cup of tea, this is a decent release. (AM)

(Perpetual Motion Machine, PO Box 657, Hamilton, VA 20159, theperpetualmotionmachine.com)

QUILLS – "I Sank Your Battleship" EP

Emotional metal hardcore (or try a fast BURIAL YEAR) with a really good drummer, too bad QUILLS is playing some beat to the ground like a DILLENGER or DAUGHTERS parody, because with the drummer they have this could be something special. Scott Hull mastered this 7"—I guess that's something special. Oh, and its one-sided vinyl, that's special. (NE)

(Burn Bridges, 2981 Falls Rd, Baltimore MD 21211)

RADIANT BOYS – " Bullet Flavoured Kiss" CD

Contrived tough guy rock. Unconvincing and forced, all brought to the boil with over the top vocals. Not badly played, just badly written and conceived. (SD)

(Wanker, PO Box 200587, D–35018 Marburg, GERMANY)

RAISED BY WOLVES – s/t EP

Rather by-the-numbers garage rock here; their Ken Rock 7" was better. That tells me that they have more good stuff in them, just not here. Buy the REATARDS' record from this label instead. (RW)

(Zaxxon, CP 1218, Sorel-Tracy, QC J3P 7L5, CANADA)

RED DEVIL – "Threats & Warnings" CD

Despite the double kick drum, clean chugga-chugga, and noodle-y guitar leads, *Threats & Warning* doesn't come off as a metal record at all. Luckily, the female vocals give it a completely different feel—more of a catchy, almost anthemic, pop-punk thing. I can see a basement packed with drunk, sweaty kids singing along to this band and having a lot of fun. But it's way too "feel good" and not nearly dumb enough for me to ever want to listen to at home. (VH)

(Red Devil, 219 S. 45th St., Philadelphia, PA 19104)

RIVER CITY TANLINES – "All 7 Inches Plus 2 More" LP

This LP is a vinyl release of the CD on Dirtnap that collected the RIVER CITY TANLINES' previous vinyl output plus two songs. Now that you have hopefully followed that, RIVER CITY TANLINES is one of the numerous projects of one Alicja Trout of Contaminated Records. This LP is basically broken down to each side devoted to a different rhythm section, with a new track from each group. Side A is more poppier than side B, but both sides are great. If you were a fan of either the BLACK SUNDAY or LOST SOUNDS projects that Alicja was involved in, than you should really like the RIVER CITY TANLINES. (JF)

(Soul Is Cheap, PO Box 11552, Memphis, TN 38111, www.soulischeap.com)

RUNNAMUCKS – "Inferno" LP

RUNNAMUCKS have added a fourth member for their third LP, and they've rocked out their sound a bit. With a new lead guitarist, the guitar noodling increases, the drums became more solid, and most noticeably, the tempo has slowed to an up-tempo pace. *Inferno*'s production is much more slick, but their vocals and lyrics remain in the fantasy realm of comic books and mild absurdities. Old fans might be a bit turned off with the new sound, but I dig on their hard rock energy and style. (HM)

(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931, www.sixweeksrecords.com)

SAIRAAT MIELET – "Controversial History: 1988-1993" CD

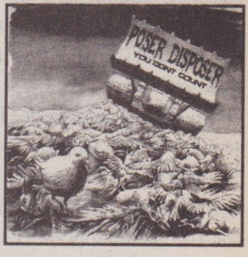
What a crazy fucking band, playing intensely raw, memorable, straight edge thrash in Finland in the late early '90s, when *no* bands in Finland were straight edge (if SAIRAAT MIELET isn't the only ever sXe band from Finland, than they were certainly the first) and almost all world sXe bands were baggy-shorted jocks. I have long been way into this band, even though I think they've been overlooked by a lot of people, so this CD is a welcome reissue of their only two EPs, both now out of print. The *Tippa Tappaa* EP, their second, easily makes it onto any "top EPs of the '90s" list I may make, for sheer intensity alone. Even though the singer is pretty much screaming at full-force the whole way through, the record somehow doesn't lose momentum or get tedious due to overkill; in fact, the crazy vocals totally make this band's sound for me, even saving the slower, more guitar-noodly moments in their catalogue. Their first EP (second on this CD), *Punk on Paskaa* ("Punk Is Bullshit") is also excellent, though not quite as good as *Tippa Tappaa*. The one thing I'm not sure of is why the extra stuff from their *Extended Plays* discography LP (demo tracks, rehearsal tracks, and *Tippa Tappaa* outtakes) isn't included on this CD—while that stuff isn't as essential as the EP tracks, it would've been cool to have the whole discography on CD. In any case, whether you track down the original vinyl or pick up this reissue, SAIRAAT MIELET gets a hearty recommendation from this reviewer. (GN)

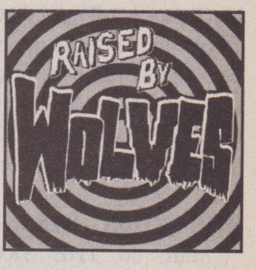
(Six Weeks, 225 Lincoln Ave, Cotati, CA 94931)

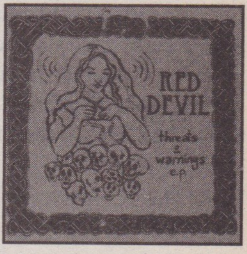
SCARS OF TOMORROW – "The Beginning Of" CD

Great news, meatheads—now while waiting for the latest Street Team instructions from the Victory Sales & Marketing headquarters, you can beat each other up while spinning SCARS OF TOM's early work. It's important to stay flexible and stretch before and after all bro-downs so as not to pull a hammie during spin kicks. (EL)

(Thorp, www.thorprecords.com)







SKARPRETTER – LP

These Copenhagen, Denmark punks got together in 2004 with ex-members of PARAGRAF 119, GORILLA ANGREB, and HEAD UP. SKARPRETTER sings most of their songs in English with political leanings to the left. They use their melodic punk rock to rail against war, police brutality, and greedy capitalists. The songs have hooks with nice sing-a-long choruses. These consummate musicians have a very polished sound. The album exhibits technical skill in recording and production. The SKARPRETTER LP is satisfying on a casual listening level—you will not fly out of your chair with excitement. Perhaps during a live show with copious amounts of alcohol, SKARPRETTER would punk out in a reasonable fashion. This record is not recommended for you headbangers! (BR)

(Hug, www.skarpretter.com)

SKITSYSTEM – "Stigmata" LP

Harsh. Harsh even by SKITSYSTEM standards. While the twelve songs are sung in Swedish and given very thoughtful explanations (in English) of their progressive and forward-thinking values, the music is just complete brutality—slathering, savagely harsh vocals that make the back of *your* throat hurt just by listening to them. Completely maxed-out guitar distortion with pounding riffs that are near fused in-the-red solid as metal-sodden, black metal-influenced attack of dark tones and forces that let loose the occasional wicked solo wail. Pounding d–beat keeps the energy level rampant. Mean. (KS)

(Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.havocrex.com)

THE SKUDS – "Absurd" EP

Man, do THE SKUDS love to party. Wooooodoggy, this poster has some funny stuff on it—people getting wasted, people passing out, and partyin' punks slammin'. THE SKUDS lead a party lifestyle and they play fast punk. It's sort of charging but it's not quite there; it's a mish-mash of different party punk stylings all rolled into three dudes from Georgia who can't stop partying. (NE)

(The Skuds Manor, 804 Ellis Street, Apt. B, Augusta, GA 30901)

SLEEPER CELL – "Alarm" LP

An awesome twelve-song 45-rpm LP of throttling, straight-ahead hardcore in the DEATHREAT/BALANCE OF TERROR/NO PARADE school from Boston. Giving '80s guitar-driven hardcore a few modern flourishes, twists and turns, and organic buildups and breakdowns, but retaining the high energy direct current of charging speed, speeding drums, and harsh-throated vocals. The cover art (of a crucified Jihadist suicide bomber) is a more open-to-interpretation, ambivalent message than the point blank, direct, and powerful apocalyptic, political, anti–cop, and anti–religion lyrics. Maintaining an intensity even on half speed mid-tempo ragers, this is solid throughout. Boss!!! (KS)

(Partners in Crime, PO Box 11787, Portland, OR 97211, www.partnersincrime.com)

LOS SLEEPERS – " Zombie" 10"

Spanish-sung rock 'n' roll from what sounds like the early-to-mid '60s. As all the information is in the ol' foreign tongue, I'm pretty much stumped for info. Nice packaging and pressing from Electro Harmonix. Though not a must for all those '60s garage record nerds, this is a pleasant take on the frat boy rock 'n' roll that was all the rage back then. It's a bit too tame for my discriminating ear, which much prefers the out-of-control ruckus of the SONICS and DON AND THE GOODTIMES. (SD)

(Electro Harmonix, www.muster-records.com)

SLIGHTLY LESS THAN NOTHING – "Northwest Panda Violence" EP

S.LT.N (as I'm now calling them) gives you three songs on red wax, bustin' at you from the homeland of grunge. Don't be fooled by the location, though—if you were hoping for some TEMPLE OF THE DOG cover band you're soon to be disappointed. S.L.T.N. has fast "panda" violence parts and slow not-so-"panda" violence riffs leaning more in the FACEDOWNINSHIT realm than anything else that comes to mind, topped off by some surprisingly DEVOLA-sounding vox. (NE)

(Aborted Society, PMB 1377, 1122 East Pike St, Seattle WA 98122)

SMARTUT KAHOL LAVAN – "Spontaneous Violence" CD

Israel-based brutal hardcore of the early-'80s variety. Sort of like BLACK FLAG with some off-kilter moments. Best part about it? Sung entirely in Hebrew. Don't fear fellow gentile, there's a lyric sheet translated in English. The lyrics are equally brutal with some genuinely disturbing/disturbed commentary on religion, the state of Israel, and stabbing bouncers. The kids in Israel are pissed and with a laundry list of good reasons. (ST)

(Boshet, www.gutzy.com/boshet)

STENCH – "Moral Debauchery" EP

Reissue of this 1982 "lost classic" from the wastelands of Wolverhampton (if you don't know where that is…it's better that way). Very simplistic, badly played UK82 snot punk, not unlike fellow Midlanders RIOT SQUAD or even SPECIAL DUTIES. If you dig that demo quality, biscuit tin drums, plodding UK snot punk, this is great. Even though it's a pretty terrible record I have a place in my heart for this kind of stuff and am glad it's out there. Did it really need to be reissued in 2006? Probably not. (TB)

(Puke n Vomit, PO Box 3425, Fullerton, CA 92834, www.pukenvomitrecords.com)

T-VIRUS – "Horror Thir13teen" CD

With much foresight and brilliance, there are thir13teen (13) tracks on this badboy. These talented goths deliver some pretty choice goth rock/metal tunes. Like a serious goth band, T-VIRUS features a solid organist, and the organ parts are crucial for those 1970s classic rock tunes, those 1970s pop ditties, and those strategically placed eerie sounds. These quality goth tunes also feature over-the-top dumb goth lyrics, which are another essential part of a quality goth release. Pretty cool for goths. (HM)

(Blood and Guts, www.bloodandgutsrecords.com)

TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM – "Where You Goin' Cowboy" EP

An enthusiastic and charming 7" (replete with *Saved By the Bell* references galore) of fun-loving Canadian hardcore punk. This band reminds me of a zillion punk bands playing simple, timeless punk rock; at times they have a sing-a-long, SoCal feel to them, at times they have an almost street punk vibe, and at still other times they remind me of the more hardcore-tinged Gilman/East Bay bands of the late '80s/early '90s. While not the most life-changing record I've ever heard, this EP is at least good enough to mean that I'd check this band out if ever I was passing through Ottawa. (GN)

($4 ppd: Sir Punkly, 1435 Bedaque Court, Ottawa, Ontario K1C 3H2, CANADA take14theteam@hotmail.com)

TERMINALS – "Takin' Care of Brooks" EP

I listened to the A-side of this record about five times in a row. I could have listened to it five more times in all probability if I didn't have more important top-secret things to do. From this you could deduce that I *really like this song a whole lot*. In fact I think I am going to have to listen to it again. The song in question is a cover of "Ritual" by THE MODS who I know nothing about, but I do know that this version is totally killer. The singer Liz has the best voice; it reminds me a little of Paula Pierce of the PANDORAS, which is kind of refreshing because I feel like a lot of girls fronting garage bands are going for the ice cold Alicja Trout sound—which I like too—but…Paula Pierce! Totally

dreamy. Anyway, the B-side, i.e. their own songs, are not as knock-out-drop-dead-instant-desperate-dance-party-top-ten-worthy; the music is more generic R 'n' R straight from the garage to the bar... But "Ritual" is such an intensely rad song it's worth the price of admission. (LG)
(Boom Chick, www.boomchickrecords.com)

TERROR LEVEL RED – "Lost" EP

A scathing, two-song attack of dark Svensk/FROM ASHES RISE/THE AWAKENING-style hardcore, with bleak lyrics screeched and shouted by harsh vocal trade-offs. Long compositions of metallic hardcore are broken up by smatterings of near-acoustic bridges and slow dirge between densely distorted low-end heavy hardcore bombardment. Solid, bleak, and dark. Nice silkscreened sleeve. (KS)
(Terror Level, no address)

TERVEET KÄDET – "Jeesus Perkele" EP

This hot little EP brings us nine ragers from the legendary Finnish maniacs TERVEET KÄDET. Included is *Rock Laa Hausta Vastaan*—their unbelievably vicious first release from 1980—their four tracks from the 1984 *Yalta Hi-Life* comp, and a few live tracks. Fast, raw, and totally pissed. It doesn't get much better than this, folks. (VH)
(omak_perkele@pp.inet.fi)

THANKGOD – "For Pregnant Virgins" CD

THANKGOD plays cool, intense hardcore with lots of stops and starts and quirk in their songwriting, which shouldn't come as a surprise considering this band's pedigree; THANKGOD comes from the family tree that includes GUYANA PUNCHLINE, INITIAL STATE, DOTFUCKINGCOM, and ANTISCHISM. This has elements of the relentless wall of sound that made INITIAL STATE the great band that they were, but the songs are more fragmentary, leaving a little less to hold onto on first (or second or fifth) listen. Nonetheless, *For Pregnant Virgins* (what?) has some melody in the cacophonous guitar parts (though I could do without all of the "breather" quiet parts). This is a good full-length that would have been better if it stuck entirely to the band's more intense/HC elements rather than try to throw in singing, "eclectic," or quiet parts. That shit just makes your band emo. I do give THANKGOD props for being pretty unique, though if they streamlined their sound just a bit I would have been more prone to giving this a stronger recommendation. As it is, this CD is just a bit too all over the map for me. (GN)
(Tick Tock, 1721 Ashley Hall Rd, Apt 3U, Charleston, SC 29407)

TRAGEDY – "Nerve Damage" LP

I don't think it would be an exaggeration to call the new TRAGEDY LP the most anticipated DIY hardcore record of the year so far. It was not without some trepidation that I first put this record on—after all, not many bands can pull off three great LPs, and it's always sad to see the mighty fall. So what's the verdict? At its core, *Nerve Damage* isn't really a departure from the band's first two LPs (as though I need to describe what this band sounds like)—Scandi-beat-influenced hardcore with *a lot* of cues taken from the greats of Japanese hardcore, filtered through TRAGEDY's particular songwriting sense. If it's possible, *Nerve Damage* seems to have an even darker worldview than its immediate predecessor. The songs are fast, vicious, and pissed off. This batch of songs remind me of HIS HERO IS GONE more than any of the previous TRAGEDY stuff, as the overall mood is a bit more desperately urgent than it is anthemic. I could go on and on, but what's the point? This record straight up rules. It sounds great, it's got all of the elements that have elevated TRAGEDY to classic status without sounding like a rehash of their previous stuff, and this might be the most cohesive of their three LPs—songs like "The Hunger" and "Eyes of Madness" are already favorites. Amazing. (GN)
(Tragedy, no address)

THE TRASHIES – "Taz Tattoo / Get Daddy a Chicken Sandwich"

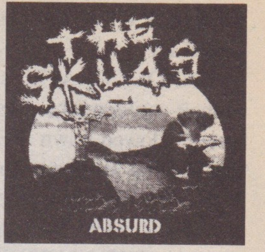
THE TRASHIES sound like they're doing their best SPITS imitation, and they do it pretty well. THE TRASHIES are from Seattle too...hmmmm, I wonder... Ah, who gives? This is a solid keyboard-driven low-fi trash punk release. One of the best releases this month. (HM)
(The Party's Over, www.thepartysoverrecords.com)

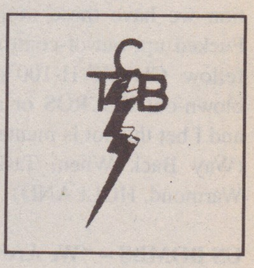
TRICYCLE FARM – "Everything's On Sale" CD

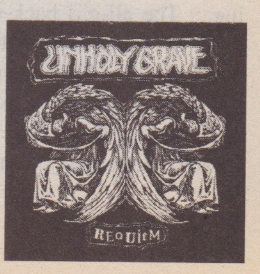
Wearing their LEATHERFACE and JACK PALANCE BAND influences on their sleeves, Chattanooga's TRICYCLE FARM busts out a solid album of gruff, melodic region-rock. They even manage to do a decent job at covering a POGUES song ("Ghost of a Smile"), which heretofore has never been done by anyone in my opinion (face it, even DILLINGER FOUR couldn't do it). Some songs fall flat, usually due to the singer trying a little hard to stay in gravelly mode. When it comes naturally though, it rocks like hell, especially on the songs "No Cause" and "We Need." The Rob McGregor (engineer of every No Idea band ever) recording really makes this band shine too. (PC)
(ADD, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33604)

TUBERS – "The Ultimate Late Night Didn't Taste Right" LP

As soon as the needle hit this record I was in love with it. It's not very timely, but it evokes the jangly, tuneful post-punk that we used to call college rock. Very similar to SQUIRREL BAIT, especially in the lyrics and the vocal delivery. Remember SQUIRREL BAIT? I really liked SQUIRREL BAIT. I'm also reminded of EVERGREEN (the Louisville, KY EVERGREEN that is). I guess I'm saying that this band sounds like they're from Kentucky, even though they're from Florida. The songwriting and playing here is really solid—melodic but melancholic, not poppy in the slightest. I will be seeking this one out, as should you. (AM)
(Bakery Outlet, PO Box 4054, St. Augustine, FL 32085, www.bakeryoutletrecords.com)







UNHOLY GRAVE / THE VANISHING ACT – split EP

UNHOLY GRAVE's side starts out with one of their cooler tracks—a severely damaged, distorted, slowed-down FEAR OF GOD cover that's quite different from their usual stuff. Elsewhere they have other not-just-sheer-speed stuff that's catchy and stands out from the rest. Ottawa's THE VANISHING ACT aren't much to write home about however—a few good riffs, but too noisy to make much impact, especially with the constant annoyingly whiney vocals. Actually, skip the first song, and the next two are pretty interesting and evil metallic grind. (EL)

(Sir Punkly, www.sirpunkly.com)

UPSTAB – "w/Report" EP

Jesus, fucking Cleveland. What is it about that town that makes them all such fucking maniacs? Keeping in the age-old Clevo tradition we have these nutjobs' second offering. Fucked up, out-of-control hardcore not unlike fellow Clevo's H-100's, or maybe a more blown-out NECROS or something. Great disc and I bet this lot is mental live… (TB)

(Way Back When, Taskinlaan 9, 2361 XM Warmond, HOLLAND)

US BOMBS – "We Are The Problem" CD

I used to love these guys. I flew all the way from Ireland to see them play here at the Chameleon nine years ago...then I kinda lost interest in them during the great West Coast street punk revival of the late '90s. I must say that this all sounds very good. The lyrics have a more political-than-usual theme; the line, "The less you have to say this band's name, the better" in the title track says it all. This is great. Seventy-seven out of a possible seventy-seven. (AD)

(Sailor's Grave, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612, www.sailorsgraverecords.com)

VAADAT KISHUT – CD

Some Israeli hardcore, played by three girls and a dude, that reminds me of HARUM SCARUM. It's also got a Profane Existence-style hardcore feel to it but is super melodic in places kind of like SIGNAL LOST. The lyrics are in Hebrew and English, and have a very politicized and feminist independent-minded streak to them—anti-military, pro-hitchhiking… The all-girl back-ups kind of made me think of youth crew, which might bum them out. I like this. The singer has a cool voice, and it's rad to know about pockets of resistance in all corners of the world… (LG)

(Boshet, www.gutzy.com/boshet)

VAGINASORE JR – "Strikes and Gutters" CD

VAGINASORE JR definitely has the best band name in this issue. These pop-punksters deliver a dual-vocal attack much like the infamous THIS BIKE IS A PIPEBOMB or OPERATION CLIFF CLAVIN, sung over up-beat, mid-tempo QUEERS-esque ditties. Before the ten-song CD was over, the guitars and vocals had become horribly annoying… but I do know lots of kids that love that kinda shit. What the fuck do I know? (HM)

(ADD, PO Box 8240, Tampa, FL 33674, www.addzine.com/records)

VAGEENAS – "Teenage Music" CD

The VAGEENAS are definitely *lifers*—they'll be dying their hair easter-egg pink and budget shopping for leopard-print spandex when the rest of us are hooked up to life-support machines. It's a compliment! While nothing on *Teenage Music* clobbers me between the ears with its originality/technical prowess/carefully-wrought statements, it's fun and spirited punk with a gravelly sound and snide attitude. Call 'em a more rock 'n' roll UXA, or a louder and faster SNAP-HER (ha!), call 'em what you want—they won't answer, anyway. (JH)

(Plastic Bomb, Postfach 100205, D-47002 Duisburg, GERMANY, www.plastic-bomb.de)

VERONA VEI – "Diary of a Stone Romantic" CD

Back in the old days (well, the early '90s; age is always relative), this kind of stuff was a subset of SoCal melodic hardcore. Not so much LAGWAGON and FACE TO FACE, but more of that smooth, sugary sound patented by the likes of GAMEFACE. These days it just sounds more like the fodder masquerading as punk that's pushed by Clear Channel alt.rock radio stations, *Alternative Press*, Vagrant Records, *et al*. If that sounds appealing, this'll be right up your alley. Though, of course, this might not be the mag for you, in that case. Six tracks, for what it's worth. (RK)

(DoughMain, www.doughmainrecords.com)

VIER PROMILLE – "Alte Schule" CD

Second full length from this German outfit. Sung in a mixture of their native tongue and English, with some fine female vocals gracing a handful of tracks. They've managed to capture that classic, broad church Oi feel—though the sound is considerably updated. There are some melodic rockers mixed in with some more "traditional" stuff (complete with piano, strings, whistle, *et al.*), including a POGUES cover. They do it all really well. Lots of melody, harmony, and some great songwriting. Think the pop end of the early BUSINESS mixing it up with the more folk-infused SWINGIN' UTTERS material, with a healthy dash of '77-era pub rock. Really good. For what it's worth, this is the "other" band from the main man of the PORTERS. This outfit is far superior. (RK)

(Knockout, www.knock-out.de)

WALK ASIDE – "This Ain't No Market" EP

Smart, conscious lyrics and an interesting blend of catchy, mid-paced straight edge hardcore is what WALK ASIDE brings to table. The music is raw and catchy enough that I'm not bothered by the weird parts where the vocalist actually sings. This is good. Eclectic, but good. (CC)

(Carte Blanche, 1373 Argyle, Montreal QC, H3G IV5, CANADA)

WELCH BOYS – CD

From Boston, these guys play Celtic flavored street-core. I know it sounds weird, but imagine a mix of DROPKICK MURPHIES and SLAPSHOT (with whom these guys share at least one member), and this is what you get. (AD)

(Sailor's Grave, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612, www.sailorsgraverecords.com)

WHOREHOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – "Discography 1993-1999" 2xLP

Whew, listening to two LPs worth of material all in one sitting from this mid-to-late '90s band was, I have to admit, kind of a chore. WHOREHOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES fit in nicely with the then-flourishing anarcho-hardcore scene of the '90s, though their straightforward political punk (with female vocals) sounds pretty dated (and pretty boring) at this point. There is really nothing *wrong* with this band per se (unless you think it's wrong to be in a mediocre band with Punk 101 lyrics), but I am not sure I see the need for such an extensive discographical reissue, especially since I don't think there is a whole lot separating WoR from legions of similar bands then or now. Super fans will be pleased with the well-done gatefold packaging, lyrics, flyers, and liners, but I can't really see being into this without an accompanying nostalgia trip. (GN)

(Inimical, PO Box 2803, Seattle, WA 98111, www.inimical.com)

WITCH HUNT – "Blood-Red States" LP

What a pleasant surprise—this is way, *way* better than their first album. The band sounds so much fuller and tighter due to the acquisition of an awesome new drummer, Vince, allowing Rob to move from drums to second guitar and concentrate more on vocals. The wall-of-noise

production is fucking killer, and the songs are more powerful and more melodic at the same time—if only more bands could have this combination! As before, WITCH HUNT's most notable attribute is the brutal, scorching, and still tuneful vocals of Nicole and Janine. Their music is a pounding, flowing, crashing wave of beautiful, dark crust-core, proving that a band can play epic crust and *not* sound like TRAGEDY. Again, other bands should take the cue. The lyrics on this LP read almost like the anti-war coming-of-age rock opera that those poser stadium-punks wish they could have written. Amazing! (PC)
(Profane Existence, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

XMILK – "Discografia Completa" CD

Driving, straightforward, melodic hardcore, notably indebted to GORILLA BISCUITS but done right. XMILK hails from Spain and this disc features over 30 tracks covering two albums and their original demo—all of which were recorded between 1995 and 1998. Tracks from *Function* stand out the most to me; these songs are short, to the point, well played, and don't delve into the more cliché modern hardcore pitfalls that start to show on the second album. A good listen. (BS)
(BCore, www.bcoredisc.com)

V/A – "America's Unknown" LP

However you look at it—a comp with a fanzine-sleeve or a zine with a free comp LP—this is essential for '80s-o-philes and people in their mid-30s who regret dumping their old demo collections. The album is an edited and improved version of the cassette comp of the same name from 1986. Oddly, most of these bands are *still* unknown. Sure, you may have discovered Florida's great bands STEVIE STILLETTO AND THE SWITCHBLADES and MAGGOT SANDWICH by now, but who the hell knows HB's catchy ASH TRADITION or LA peace-punk thrashers ENTROPY? How 'bout Roseville, CA's tuneful garage moshers IDENTITY CRYSIS? Now some killer old song faves like STUKAS OVER BEDROCK's snotty "Life Like Yogi" and CHRONIC DISORDER's chaotic yet tight "See Red" and "Point:Counterpoint" might finally get the appreciation they deserve. The record cover/zine is *Artcore*'s 20th anniversary issue, dedicated, as always, to nostalgic ramblings on '80s punk and the best current international bands. It's got well done and beautifully presented articles and interviews (in a 40-page, litho-printed zine) with such bands as CAREER SUICIDE, SMALLTOWN, and DIRECT CONTROL from nowadays, as well as STATE, BAD POSTURE, and record labels Frontier and Bemisbrain from back-in-the-day. Totally awesome! (PC)
($18 ppd: Artcore, 1 Aberdulais Road, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 2PH, Wales, UK, artcore@ntlworld.com)

V/A – El Cambio Empieza En Mi CD

From what I can tell, this compilation covers bands mostly (if not all) from South America. There are a wide variety of styles covered here, but the most predominant one is beefy, East Coast (USA) style hardcore. To be honest, I had never heard of any of the bands on here, but there are a few standouts. The fast sXe-style hardcore of FUERZA DE VOLUNTAD and DIAS DE GLORIA are my favorites. If you are interested in finding out about the current South American hardcore scene then you should check this out. (RC)
(Decision Personal)

V/A – "The Funhouse Comp Thing" CD

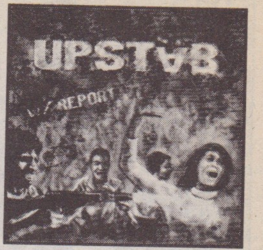
A live record, culled from the archives of Seattle's Funhouse—apparently the longest-standing punk venue in town. The unifying concept here is that all the comped acts have graced/greased its stage, among them the UNNATURAL HELPERS, PRIMATE 5, TRASHIES, BLACK HORSE, HEAD, PULSES, GAS HUFFER, FALL-OUTS, ARMITAGE SHANKS, OLD HAUNTS, FREAK OUTS, DEAD VAMPIRES (a Michael Lucas favorite, I believe), BUGS, GIRL TROUBLE, SHACKLES, MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS, SERMON, CRIPPLES, INVISIBLE EYES, REPEAT OFFENDERS, and lots more. I'm not really a fan of live records *per se* but this is a nice tribute to a rainbound scene. (JH)
(Funhouse, www.thefunhouseseattle.com)

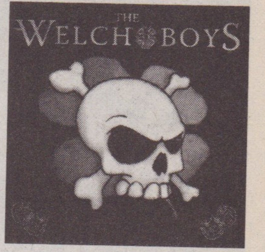
V/A – "Go Cat Go!: A Tribute to the Stray Cats" CD

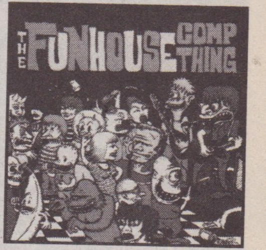
I have to concede, upfront, that I'm not a big fan (or even a little one) of rockabilly/psychobilly/whateveritis-calledthesedaysbilly. And I wasn't that fussed on the STRAY CATS either. But, they did have a good pop/new wave sensibility, and that has been faithfully preserved on this collection of largely carbon-copy tributes/covers. 15 bands do their best, including even some I've actually heard of—PHENOMENAUTS, REEL BIG FISH, KOFFIN KATS, HELLBILLYS, STONECUTTERS, and more. An international lineup for sure. And, dare I say it, this comp is growing on me. (RK)
(Hairball8, www.hairball8.com)

V/A – "Vaya Mierda de Disco" EP

I'm a sucker for a piece of shit on a record cover… and since this release has a shitty cover along with pictures of Bambi and friends shitting, Hello Kitty holding a piece of shit and a piece of actual toilet paper with what looks to be shit included with this release, all I can say is *get this today!!!!!* This 7-inch EP features fifteen pretty low-fi bands with some rudimentary songs and recordings. I've actually heard practice tapes that sound better than most of the tracks, but the energy, originality, and delivery are genuine. THE GRABBIES, PILI Y SUS LECHONES, KILLER NUNSS, IAN STUART LITTLE, and DILDOS are the standouts. This release is limited to 100 copies, so I advise that you get off your ass and get this brilliant, shit-filled package! (HM)
(Hillside Strangler, Apdo. 13120, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN, www.hillsidestrangler.tk)







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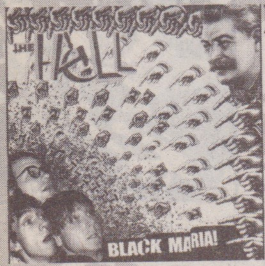

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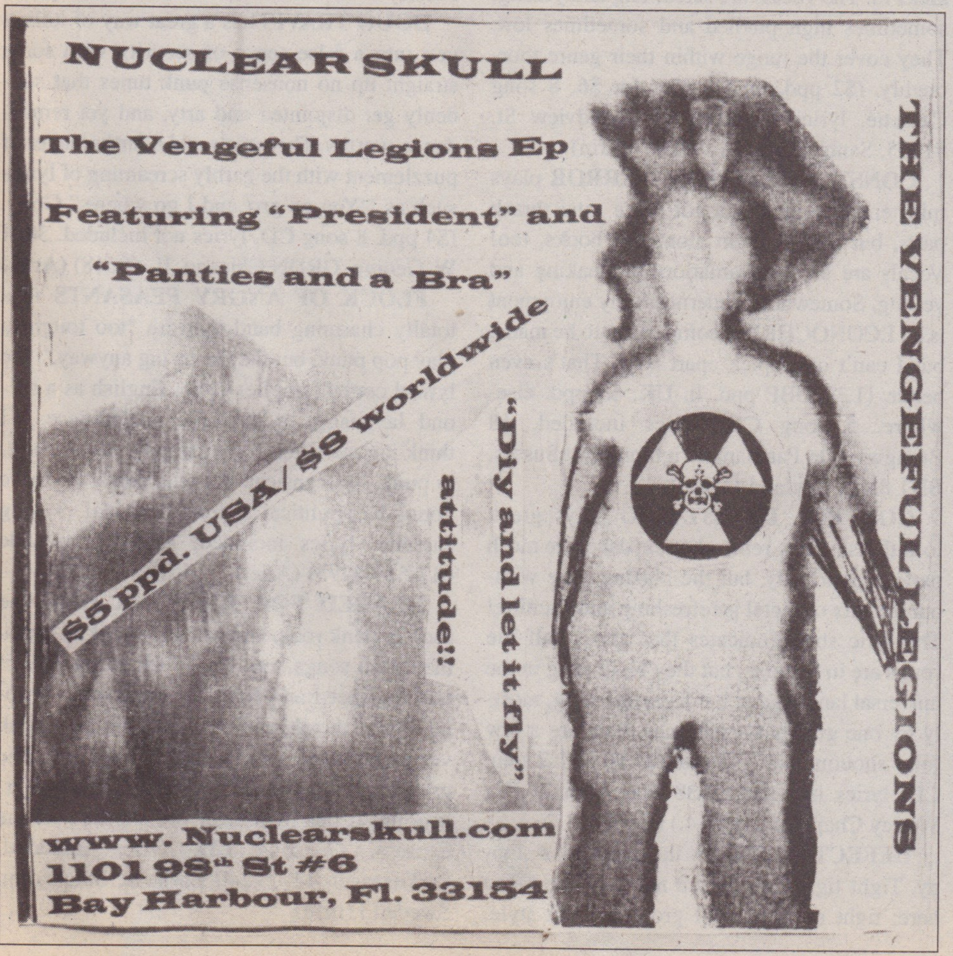
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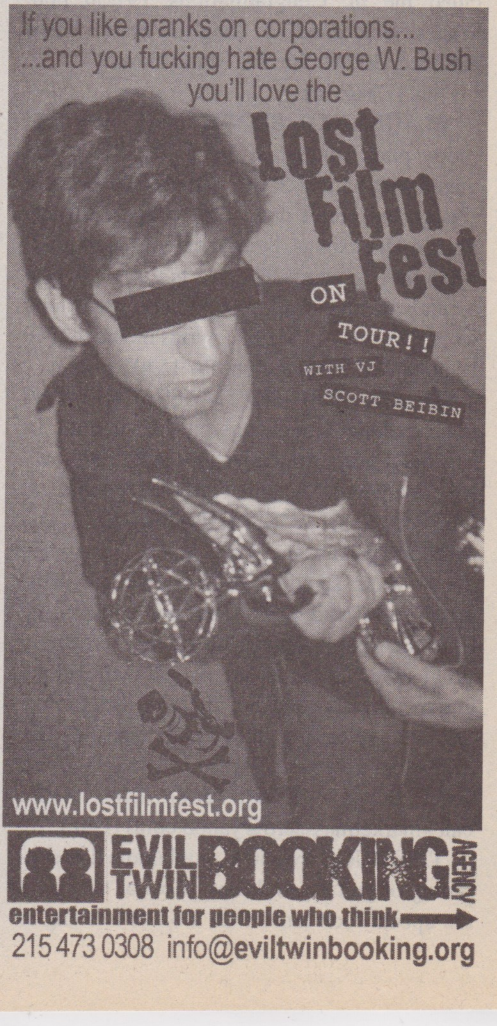
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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Peter Avery, Ariel Awesome, and Erin Yanke.

AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER plays crazy hardcore that is surprising in its twists and turns. They've got guitar work that spans from quick, wanking solos, to driving hardcore, to dissonant background subtleties. The rhythm section is full on at all times, it seems. The vocals are screaming and in your face, but work to add another layer of texture to the mix. (7 song Cassette, lyrics included. 385 S. Peter St, Athens, GA 30601.) (Erin)

ASH DANCE may be the baby birthed from the *Shit Split*! They've got the vocals and straight forward catchiness of the FILTH side, the trashy chaotic instrumentation of the BLATZ side, and the full on punk rock fuck you to bring us all together. Also, the *Absolutely Zippo* layout style of the lyric sheet clued me in. Congratulations. ($1.50 ppd. Trades welcomed! 5 song Cassette, lyrics included. 306 N. 5th St., Grand Haven, MI 49417.) (Erin)

BLACKENED SPORK plays slow and snotty punk songs that are guitar driven and tinged with hard rock riffs. The vocals are sung clearly, but aren't drawn out over the music. They're dark songs, but not evil or aggro, even when they're angry. They've got a few instrumentals to mix it up, too. Variety, yes! Good work. ($3 ppd. 7 song CD, lyrics included. 240 Winona Ave, Washington, PA 15301.) (Erin)

BLACK MARKET MASSACRE plays three rock/hardcore songs on their demo CD. The band plays up-tempo '80s style rock with a hardcore feel. The guitar riffs are reminiscent of bands like BLACK SABBATH, AC/DC and MOTÖRHEAD, and there is no fear (when maybe there should be) of throwing in hair-metal style lead parts. The singer gives the band their punk sound with a deep, screaming vocal style. The songs are played well and the guitar work is good but the songs definitely follow a typical formula, which makes it easy to lose interest in the music. (3 song CD, no lyrics, PO Box 29565, Parma, Ohio 44129, balckmarketmassacre@yahoo.com) (Pete)

THE BUGS are a lo-fi, punk/indie duo consisting of guitar and drums. Most of the songs are upbeat rock tunes with a bit of a twang to the clean guitar and sound similar to BRENT'S TV. The vocals are sung in a nasal style for most of the songs while a female vocalist takes over for a couple of the songs. Their couple of slower country tunes are some of the better ones but the whole CD is really a pretty fun listen. (18 song CD, no lyrics, no address) (Pete)

Dear **CANADIAN RIFLE**: I can't get your CD to play! I tried a few different machines, and alas, to no avail. Please send another! Love —Erin

THE CHILDRENS CRUSADE plays "posi-violence," which sounds a lot like power violence. The songs sometimes start out with slower metal and sometimes are just straight up fast and furious until the mid-mosh part kicks in. The vocals are screaming and yelling, sometimes high pitched and sometimes low. They cover the range within their genre thoroughly. ($2 ppd, or 4 copies for $6. 8 song Cassette, lyrics included. 41 Grandview St. #1405, Santa Cruz, CA 95060.) (Erin)

CONSTANT STATE OF TERROR plays mid tempo punk that's got some total thrash parts, but they brought along the hooks, too! Vocals are an amalgamation of speaking and yelling. Somewhere underneath my enjoyment is an ECONOCHRIST comparison to be made, but I can't quite pick apart why. That's even better. (1.30 GBP ppd. in UK, $3 ppd. elsewhere. 5 song CD, lyrics included. 18 Brangwyn Dr, Patcham, Brighton, East Susses, BN1 8XD, England.) (Erin)

CONTROL DE ESTATDO plays great, lo-fi thrash. They remember the dancable mosh parts occasionally, but the blazing pace without the mix of metal is refreshing and exciting! The lyric sheet indicates that about half the songs are in Spanish, but they're all sung in the universal language of hardcore shouting, mostly by one guy, but sometimes there are a few folks shouting along. Solid. ($2.50 ppd. 7 song CD, lyrics included. 5638 War Admiral Dr., Wesley Chapel, FL 33544.) (Erin)

DEFECT DEFECT is the opposite of sloppy. Tight tight tight is the name of the game here: tight rhythm, tight grooves, tight style. The music is kind of hard to pin down, it has elements of the ever inspirational classic LA punk, and the catchy hooks of a pop-new wave project. The vocals remind me of good moments in DESCENDENTS songs when Milo gets pissed, and the lyrics are the perfect amount of engagement without being overly illustrative or preachy. Yeah, yeah, yeah! (6 song cassette, lyrics included. www.defectdefect.com) (Ariel)

DISPROCESS may hate me after this, but I got a CD that said DISPROCESS Promo with another demo, and I have to say this rules. Brutal Swedish thrash with no respite. I will keep it a brief mention, in case I wasn't supposed to mention it at all, but keep an eye peeled. (11 song CD, no lyrics included. Ponney V. 28, S 12152, J-Hov, Sweden.) (Erin)

DOUG TRAVIS has a great way of lulling you into a false sense of security with some straight up no nonsense punk tunes that suddenly get disjointed and arty, and yet remain dance-worthy. The vocals add a further layer of puzzlement with the garbly screaming of lyrics such as, "You go grrr and I go wheee." Good. ($4 ppd. 8 song CD, lyrics not included. 3024 W. George, GRDN Chicago, IL 60618) (Ariel)

FLOCK OF ANGRY PEASANTS is a totally charming band that are "too tough to play pop punk, but they're trying anyway." The lyrical content implies either English as a second language, or supreme adolescence… I think it's the latter. It fun, sloppy, rowdy, snotty punk. Nonsensical, but who cares. If you're gonna be apolitical at least be dada! (3 song cassette, lyrics included. Matty Lemonade 617-519-4275) (Ariel)

HEADED FOR DISASTER keeps the rock in punk rock, and bring the rockin' out to the thrash songs, too! Hard rock guitar riffs fit into the speed and solid rhythm section keeping up the thrash, and the vocals are pure punk venom, spit and spoken, and in your face. The group back-up vocals are present, but not overbearing. If this is disaster, we should take the express. (7 song CD, lyrics included. Diskusvagen 14, 12240 Enskede, Stockholm, Sweden.) (Erin)

IN DISGUST plays tough as nails power violence, with more of the dark metal bits and pieces to slow it down and mix it up. The vocals are screeching screamed by one guy, and deep and low down by another. It sounds good, you can hear everyone, and there' s a depth to it that people don't usually achieve on the demo tape. ($2 ppd. 15 song Cassette, no lyrics included. PO Box 675, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.) (Erin)

KIDS OF CARNAGE has some melody underneath the mid- to fast paced straight forward hardcore. Sounds like they incorporate THE GERMS as much as hardcore into their listening parties. The vocals are forceful, and slower than the music on the slow songs, but keeping up well during the trashers. Good work! (Free! Be kind, and sent postage. 6 song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 37, Centerville, MA 02632.) (Erin)

LAST HOPE DOWN has a mid-'80s Southern California punk rock sound, as if BAD RELIGION didn't have a good studio or a fancy vocabulary. The vocals are more singy than that comparison might put in your brain, and sometimes they are just too far up in the mix. Mostly though, catchy and good songs are here, melodic back ups you can't help buy join, and a good driving pace. Yee haw! ($3 ppd. 18 song CD, lyrics included. 832 Meadow Rock Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30083.) (Erin)

The **MIDNIGHT BOMBERS** start their demo CD off with a scorching punk rock tune. They stick with basic up-tempo drumming, quick power chords, and vocals that sit somewhere in between singing and screaming. The second song is a slower one that lets you down a bit but they pick it back up on the third track with more of a hardcore feel and some cool, metal style lead parts. It's basic stuff but it's played pretty well.

OUR LOST CAUSE plays fast and basic melodic punk. The vocals are mostly shouted, but occasionally bring a sing song element into the mix. When the guitars are muted, the vocals are out front, but when the music is holding it's own, the songs are well balanced, spry, and engaging. ($3 ppd. 4 song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 28211, Fresno, CA 93729.) (Erin)

READ A GODDAMN BOOK is a classic example of what happens when a punk living way out in a small scene finally can't take the ignorance and shittiness of his/her daily life, gets pissed, and writes some scathing songs. Bravo. It all over the place musically (from d-beat to RUN DMC-beat), some detectable influences are AUS ROTTEN, PROPAGHANDI, and maybe THE COUP. Ideas could be a little better expressed, but overall it's a fine effort. (11 song cassette, lyrics included. readagoddamnbook@hotmail.com)

REVOLUTION OF A SUN plays aggressive and discordant dark hardcore. The songs are structured well. Lots of parts, that means, but they aren't repetitive or dull. The vocals are shouted, I think by 2 different people, but are part of the well crafted songs and deeply layered songs. ($4. 4 song CD, lyrics included. 6 Lower Janemount, Sundays Well, Cork, Ireland.) (Erin)

ROCKET ATTACK plays your blast beat filled power violence with slightly longer songs than the genre is used to, but other than that, they fill all the requirements: yelling vocals, metal guitar tones, quick tempo changes, and of course, those blast beats. They do a CROSSED OUT cover on this, too. (13 song CD, no lyrics included. 3050 Glen Acre Lane NW, Olympia, WA 98502.) (Erin)

SCHOOL plays slow and mid-tempo pop songs. The vocals are driving the show here, although the guitar and keyboards make a good go at it, and are kind of crooned, but maybe that' s just heartfelt singing. Sure is a great palate cleanser after the power violence, but the songs, although catchy and engaging, do go on a bit longer than my punk rock brain wants to keep up with. ($1 ppd. or Trade. 8 song CD, no lyrics included. 2913 Dover Lane #202, Falls Church VA 22042.) (Erin)

SL-27 blows through seven, grinding, emotional hardcore songs on their tour CD-R. The bulk of the music consists of a wall of fuzzy, overdriven guitar backed by blast beats and dynamic breakdowns while the vocalist screams without restraint. On the whole, the band sounds a lot like NEIL PERRY or maybe MOHINDER. While the recording isn't amazing, the blown out sound gives the songs a highly energetic feel that makes the CD a worthwhile listen. (7 song CD, with lyrics, Koekeokst. 7, 2400 Mol, Belgium, http://users-belgacom.net/sl-27) (Pete)

Imagine a Fat Wreck style punk band with crazy metal solos and (wussified) SLAYER riffs. You say it can't be? Well, it is! **STAMINA** has these super-clean yet metal vocals (blessedly free of that commercial faux whine) with ambitious harmonies, and these really poppy songs that have intense metal parts. No, not tough metal, I mean like fantasy metal. I can't quite wrap my head around it. (5 song CD, lyrics included. Stamina@discoverymail.net) (Ariel)

SVINOKOP plays noisy and catchy punk that has the unusual feature of leaving out the metal guitar business from the noise! They have songs that are down right rockin' in between the songs that combine the catchiness and the chaos, too. And, at the end, they have a song that' s Art Punk Chaotic to top it off. They seem to have a few vocalists, and the songs are sung in Esperanto, English, Finnish, and Russian, but not all at once. Really great, really interesting and totally fun. Get it! (9 Song Cassette, lyrics included. P.O. Box 429, St. Petersburg, 191123, Russia.) (Erin)

TOO MANY SCREAMING CHILDREN has a retrospective tape of their work, which includes four unreleased songs. They have the speed, the pace-change-on-a-dime, the samples, and the vocal styles (yelling deep throat style, crazy sore throat style, etc.) of grindcore, but they've got some plain ol' thrash times that last too long to fit neatly in the category. So, let's stretch out your expectations, and use the term grindcore, with that caveat. ($3 ppd. US/$4 World. 57 song Cassette! Lyrics included! Not Very Nice Tapes, 5726 Sussex Ct., Troy, MI 48098.) (Erin)

The **WIMPY DICKS** released their first record when I was in the fourth grade and although they were the only long running punk band in San Luis Obispo, I have still never seen them play a show. I suppose that this CD of them playing live on the local college radio station gives me that chance. Musically, the band hasn't changed much in the more than twenty years they have been around. They play fast, three chord, punk rock songs, mixing the Mystic Records sound of the early '80s with fast but sort of goofy sounding, STIKKY style hardcore. The recording sound itself is pretty good even though the vocals are a little high in the mix. (14 song CD, no lyrics, PO Box 14016, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406, www.wimpydicks.com) (Pete)

The **YOUNG LIONS** have put out one of the best demos that I have heard in a long time. They play heartfelt punk songs that are raw and driving but still catchy. Their music blends the sound of late '80s and early '90s Dischord bands like IGNITION with the poppy yet aggressive sound that made CRIMPSHRINE such a likable band. The first song, with its slightly distorted and super catchy opening guitar riff, dynamic changes and sung/yelled vocals is worth tracking this CD down all by itself. (6 song CD, with lyrics, 351 E. Taylor St., Reno, NV 89502) (Pete)

THE YOUTHS kick ass! They are the lost children in the family of great punk coming from our Swedish friends like THE VICIOUS and other Wasted Youth stuff. Totally rockin, snotty, and heartening! They even throw in hand claps here and there. I am in love. (3.5 Euros, $4 American ppd. 6 song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 229 2686-997 Sacavem, Portugal) (Erin)

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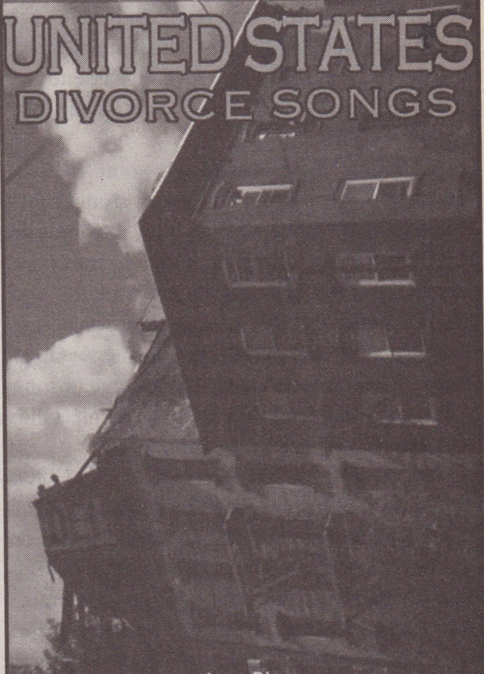

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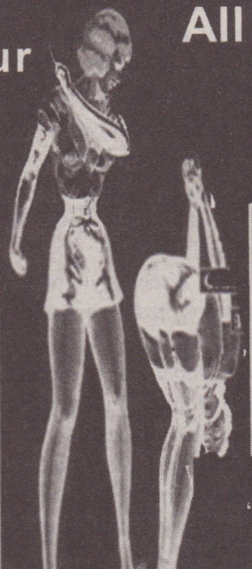

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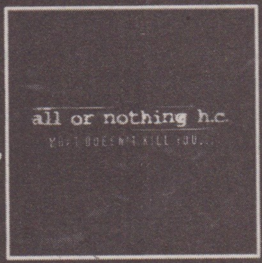

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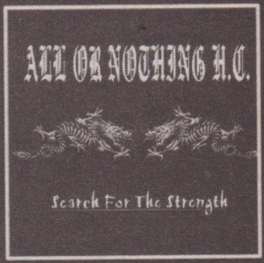

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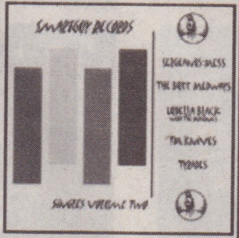

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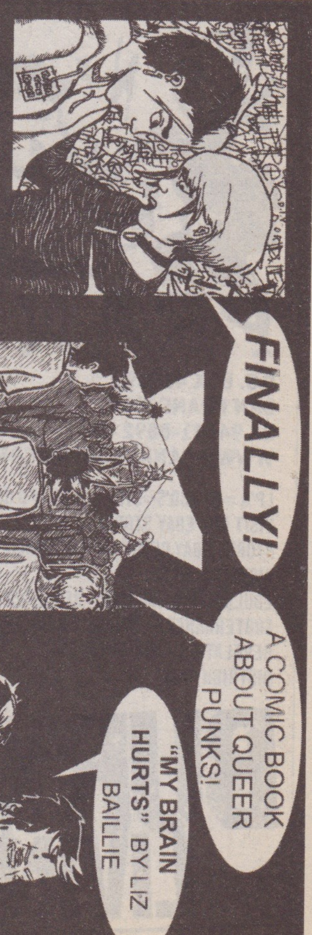

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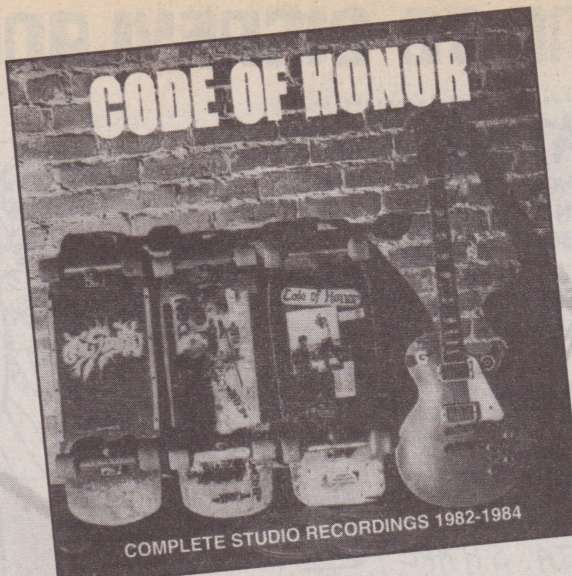

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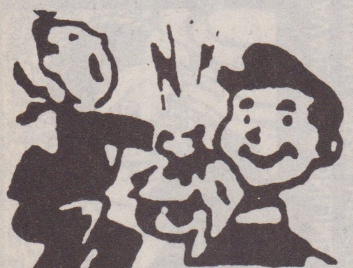

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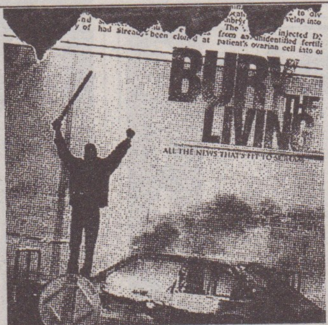

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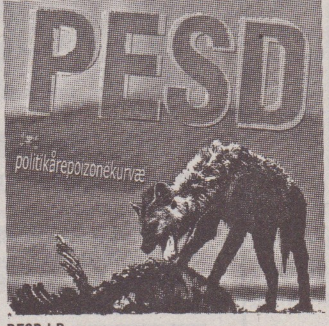

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→ **EUROPEAN TOUR MAY 2006:** 19-MAY NETHERLANDS HOOGEVEEN 20-MAY NETHERLANDS AMSTERDAM 21-MAY GERMANY MULHEIM 22-MAY SWEDEN MALMO 23-MAY SWEDEN LINKOPING 24-MAY SWEDEN TBA 25-MAY SWEDEN W/ LÄRM/MOB47 26-MAY SWEDEN STOCKHOLM 27-MAY DENMARK KOPENHAGEN 28-MAY GERMANY TBA 29-MAY GERMANY TBA 30-MAY LEIPZIG ZORO 31-MAY POLAND WARSCHAU 1-JUN POLAND LUBLIN 2-JUN POLAND NOWY SACZ 3-JUN POLAND BIELSKO 4-JUN CZECH BRNO 5-JUN CZECH JIHLAVA 6-JUN CZECH PRAGUE 7-JUN POLAND WROCLAW 8-JUN GERMANY TBA 9-JUN GERMANY TBA 10-JUN GERMANY TBA 11-JUN GERMANY TBA 12-JUN GERMANY TBA 13-JUN GERMANY TBA 14-JUN BELGIUM TBA 15-JUN BELGIUM TBA 16-JUN NETHERLANDS UTRECHT 17-JUN NETHERLANDS ARNHEM 18-JUN-AMSTERDAM W/ NIGHTMARE

ZINES

Reviews by: Mikel Delgado (MD), Layla Gibbon (LG), Chris Hubbard (CS), Harald Hartmann (HH), Nick Mangel (NM), Jeff Mason (JM), Golnar Nikpour (GN), Cooper Quintin (CQ), Casey Ress (CR), Andy Shoup (AS), Thera Webb (TW).

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

AGITATE #7 / $2 ppd
5.75 x 7.75 – copied – 20 pgs
This issue's bigger and also better than the last one I saw (and that one was pretty good). The layout is simple and neat and the photos look fine. Interviewed are Lebenden Toten, Gasmask Terror, and Leeds ABC. The ABC talk and the page from the Surrey Anarchist Group are both on the intro side of things; particularly the latter is for people new to anarchist ideas. Besthoven gets a page, too. Zines and music, excuse me, noise are reviewed. Good job here. (JM)
PO Box 202 / Shipley / BD18 3WB / UK

ALL THE DAYS ARE NUMBERED SO / $6
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 68 pgs
A pretty cool collaboration, inspired in part by the *Give Me Back* comp of the early '90s. The zine features lots of comics, some essays, and a nice graphic style. Each band on the CD has a page of lyrics/writing as well. The 24 track CD includes Pants Party, Soophie Nun Squad, The Good Good among many others. (MD)
Harlan Records / 7205 Geronimo / NLR, AR 72116
www.harlanrecords.org

ALTERNATIVE PRESS REVIEW Vol. 10 #1 / $4.95
8.5 x 11 – printed – 68 pgs
Compiling excellent articles and interviews from a number of leftist publications, *Alternative Press Review* is a refreshing and informative read. There's a great piece on video news releases, showing how corporations create ready-made video segments that are regularly aired on local TV channels as "news." The interview with the anarchists involved in the famous "McLibel" lawsuit in England is enlightening as well, showing this pair's more radical side that, for various reasons, wasn't seen during the mainstream media's coverage of the case. Other articles include a cookie-cutter interview with Noam Chomsky and an interesting critique of IndyMedia. Now if the editors wouldn't be so defensive when feminists criticize them for not having enough contributions from women… (PC)
PO Box 6245 / Arlington, VA 22206
www.altpr.org

ARTCORE #23 / $18
12 x 12 – printed – with LP
See this month's record reviews section for a full review of the latest issue of *Artcore*, as it comes with a full-length LP! (GN)
1 Aberdulais Road / Gabalfa, Cardiff / CF14 2PH / Wales / United Kingdom
artcore@ntlworld.com

BABYMOMMA #1 / $1 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 10 pgs
From Kasey Mae Deslatte, a Philadelphia art student, a handful of short written pieces with some sketch illustrations: one about waiting for "him" to call late at night, an essay about memories of her grandpa's house in NOLA, a rant about those environmental canvassers in the yellow T-shirts, and a really funny one about getting asked out by the model in her life drawing class. (PC)
badskitrec@hotmail.com

BARRELHOUSE #2 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 24 pgs
Subtitled "Pus Drunk," this falls somewhere between a comic and a story with illustrations. The artist, Dug Belan, does a great job bringing personality and life to R. Lee's tale about a shitty job and his decent into really fucked up physical and mental health. The story was intriguing and well-written but failed to reach a satisfying resolution. I feel like it had so much potential, though, that I really want to read more issues of this zine to see if they can make it work better. A way-above-average comic that's worth looking at. (PC)
R. Lee / PO Box 1421 / Oshkosh, WI 54903

BIG HANDS #2 / 2 stamps or trade
5.5 x 4.25 – copied – 36 pages
Small size personal zine focusing largely on stories (frequently punk related). I am not a per-zine fan, but I can say that the writing is well done. Also illustrations and lyrics. (NM)
Aaron / 1104 Imperial Rd. / Cary, NC 27511

BORN 20 YEARS TOO LATE #6 / $1 + postage
5.5 x 8 – copied – 24 pgs
Indeed, the retro aesthetic which most pleases me here is the grainy photocopied pictures. Only a couple are black smudges, and some look really good, like the AOS shots. The photos compliment the 95% interviews, 5% ads format. The ads are cool too, being smaller labels or distros. The interviews are hit and miss. Forca Macabra, Aghast, and AOS came out good, while some of the others (Varukers, Deathcharge, Contrast Attitude, the old Swedish EATER) suffer from uninterested or reticent respondents. Saddest of all is the five-page talk with After the Bombs, which is illegible due to the print being

reduced so much. If one were *super* dedicated maybe one could read some of it, but it seriously makes *Slug & Lettuce* look like large print for the elderly. I'll keep my eyes open for future issues for sure. (JM)
Jo / 92 Riel / Gatineau, Quebec / J8Y 5Y2 / Canada
theamebix@yahoo.com

big hands #2

BROKEN PENCIL #30 / $4.95 ppd
8.5 x 11 – printed – 68 pgs
This magazine has never really blown me away. The theme of this issue is "Day Jobs"'—guess what, most of us don't have any alternative. This has many short essays, as well as some comics and (blah) poetry on the subject of work. Overall, the writing was less than compelling. A good chunk of this is reviews (books, movies, music, zines). (MD)
PO Box 40507 STN BRM B / Toronto, ON / Canada M7Y 5J1

CITY TRASH #24 / $?
4.5x8–copied–52 pages
A rad little garage punk zine out of Holland, with interviews with current scene darlings Tokyo Electron, BBQ, and Jeffrey Novak. Usual zine fare contained within, you know reviews, scene reports, etc., mostly in English but there are some articles on pulp lit and '60s beat music in Dutch. (LG)
Mark Kuurman / Biezenveld 7943 / MC Meppel / Holland
citytrash@hotmail.com

CRUSHPUPPY #1 / $1
2.5 x 3.5 – copied – 24 pgs
OK, so in theory zines are pretty much the greatest thing ever—a democratic, creative way to share ideas, art, stories, etc. But they can really suck too. This zine is a pretty quintessential example of the idea that just because you *can* do something doesn't mean that you should. Like, just because you can write twenty barely-thought-out "love notes" to things in your life ("Dear people with body mods...you're bad...walking temptation bad...you've made your bodies your canvases and it gives me a whole new appreciation for art. Rawr."), doesn't mean that it's a good idea. I mean, this could've been halfway decent if there was some substance to each individual entry—most of the love notes are only a couple of sentences long. I think the entries are so short because they are supposed to be irreverent or quirky, but instead this zine just seems really substance-less and purposeless. Sorry. (GN)
Sarah R. / PO Box 816 / N. Tazwell, VA 24630

DISTORT #8 / $5 for 5 issue subscription
8.25 x 11.5 – copied – 8 pgs.
A pretty good photocopied thrash zine from Australia. And here I thought I was the only one left alive who loved bad hardcore and thrash. Awesome interview with Chris Erba/H-100s, some record reviews, and top ten unreleased records. Worth a buck. (CQ)
PO Box 239 / North Carlton, Victoria / 3054 / Australia

DISTORT #9 / $5 for 5 issue subscription
8.25 x 11.5 – copied – 8 pgs.
Thrash zine from Australia (they like thrash down under?). Primer on Japanese Thrash (I never knew how crazy GISM was). And the top split 12"s of all time. Not bad at all, but I hate the 8.5 x 11 format. I feel like its gonna fall apart every time I read it. This was also too quick a read. Its good, but I would like to see more content! (CQ)
PO Box 239 / North Carlton, Victoria / 3054 / Australia

DOLL #225 / ?
7 x 10 – printed – 140 pgs – Japanese
It's glossy and pretty and full of photos and ads. I can't read it, as it is in Japanese, but it looks great. Interviews with the Buzzcocks, Rezurex, Conga Fury, plus a feature on Detroit punk/rock, lots of reviews too. (MD)
No. 303 Aota Bldg. / 3-1-9 / Kita, Kohenji / Suginami-Ku / Tokyo / Japan

DOLL # 226 / $?
7.25 x 10 – printed – 144 pgs – Japanese
You might already be familiar with *Doll*, the long-running rock/punk publication from Japan. If you aren't, here's the deal: *Doll* has tons of hot photos, good layouts, and an enthusiasm that definitely crosses the language barrier. The only thing is, it's almost entirely in Japanese, so the review stops here. (AS)
No. 303 Aota Bldg. / 3-1-9 / Kita, Kohenji / Suginami-Ku / Tokyo / Japan

DWELLING PORTABLY May 2006 – $1
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 16 pgs
I've always been impressed by *Dwelling Portably* in the past. It has lots of great dialogue about living in less modern ways, and useful information about making stuff like bike trailers and water filters and outhouses. This issue is no exception. But I have to comment on the two-page article about how Eric Rudolph (a dude who possibly bombed two abortion clinics, hurting over 100 people) managed to live in the woods for five years before he was captured. Now, I'm sure if I cared about this guy or supported some right wing bullshit nutcases, or whatever, maybe I would have liked reading this. But, since my new favorite cheer is "1,2,3,4,5, Fetuses are not alive!" I really can't condone romanticizing some wingnut just because he chose to hide out in the woods. That aside, *DP* has lots of great info and is pretty damn great. (TW)
PO Box 190–L / Philomath, OR 97370

EAST VILLAGE INKY #30 / $3
5.5 x 4.25 – copied – 40 pgs
Best Zine of the Year Award (incidentally the first zine I have reviewed this year) goes to *East Village Inky*. A zine in the personal vein written by a punk mom in Brooklyn. Tons of personal stories about the trials and tribulations of being a mom. Now, to make a 21– year old boy with no children and no obligations living in San Francisco completely identify with the daily struggles of this woman is no small feat in the writing of a zine. All killer, no filler pages of handwritten stories and excellent illustrations. If you don't love this zine you should just go back to drinking your frappuchino, you fuck. (CQ)
PO Box 2275 / Brooklyn, NY / 22754

EAVES OF ASS #5 / $2 or trade
4.25 x 7 – copied – 44 pgs
This issue is all about the Autonomous Mutant Festival — kind of like a more indie Burning Man. The editor relays his experiences at the AMF, with people, drugs, nature and all the internal conflict you can imagine feeling if you were surrounded by hippies yet seeking something truly alternative to the daily grind of society. A lot of other ideas, such as the commoditization of alternative lifestyles, class issues, and elitism are all touched upon in here. A thoughtful and interesting, albeit short, read. (MD)
Craven Rock / PO Box 20692 / Seattle, WA / 98102
eavesofass@yahoo.com

EQUALIZING DISTORT Vol. 6 #3 / why don't they ever tell us how much it costs?
8.5 x 11 – copied – 20 pgs
Much thicker than usual, this issue of this Canadian zine/radio show newsletter has a heaping helping of descriptive record reviews (mostly hardcore and old punk) as well as interviews with Toronto area bands PANTY CHRIST and MURDERSQUAD T.O., the dude who does Spain's Mindless Mutant Records, and a really pointless one with BROKEN BONES. A good fanzine despite the fact that they actually liked the recent FANG picture disc. Ugh... (PC)
35 Raglan Ave. Unit 204 / Toronto, ON M6C 2K7 / Canada
equalizingXdistort@ciut.com / www.ciut.fm

THE FURY #15 / $3
8.5x11 – copied – 50 pgs
Maybe it's just because I'm sick right now, but I found this zine to be pretty boring. Let's face it, I'm not interested in reading interviews with bands, interspersed with weird maybe fictional accounts of vaguely romantic interludes. Although, there is an okay article called "Stuffed Animal Collections of the Hardline," which is about seeing a picture of a teenaged Karl from Earth Crisis in his bedroom in a photo book about teenagers and their rooms. Also, there's a story about Plan-It-X Fest. (TW) \
Mark Novotny / 5413 6th Ave. / Countryside, IL 60525
thefuryzine@hotmail.com

IF DEATH COMES #2 / $.50
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 40 pgs
This is one of those zines that I blame *Cometbus* for. Those cute little stories about the minutiae of everyday life as a young punker that Aaron wrote so well have spawned a million imitators like *If Death Comes*. They tend to have a whiny tone and read like a fourteen-year old kid's diary. They could be good, though, even great, if they understood what makes a zine great. But alas, they do not. (AS)
Woozley Farm / 6265 North St. / Halifax, NS / Canada / B3L 1P4

IMPACT #60 / $3
8x11 – printed – 48 pgs
This is the farewell issue of this free political zine. It features articles about revolutionary environmentalism, focusing on the SHAC7 FBI raids and subsequent arrests, and the continued and unnecessary use of animal testing in the cosmetics industry. The cover has a weird photoshopped picture of MLK/Che, which relates to the piece on the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., written after Coretta Scott King's death. There are "lighter" pieces and cartoons too, though the one written about the eternal May/December old man/young girl dynamic was kind of ridiculous, lots of anecdotal evidence and an irritatingly wacky writing style. (LG)
PMB 10151 / University Blvd / Orlando FL 32817

INTELLIGENCE FAILURE #3 / #1 or trade
5.5 x 4.25 – copied – 24 pages
Small zine here that is entirely a story about a guy who starts an organization called Hair Liberation Front (I won't spoil it), and his trails and tribulations. Interesting, and well written for its style. (NM)
44 Millicent Ave 2nd floor / Toronto, ON / MGH 1W4 / Canada

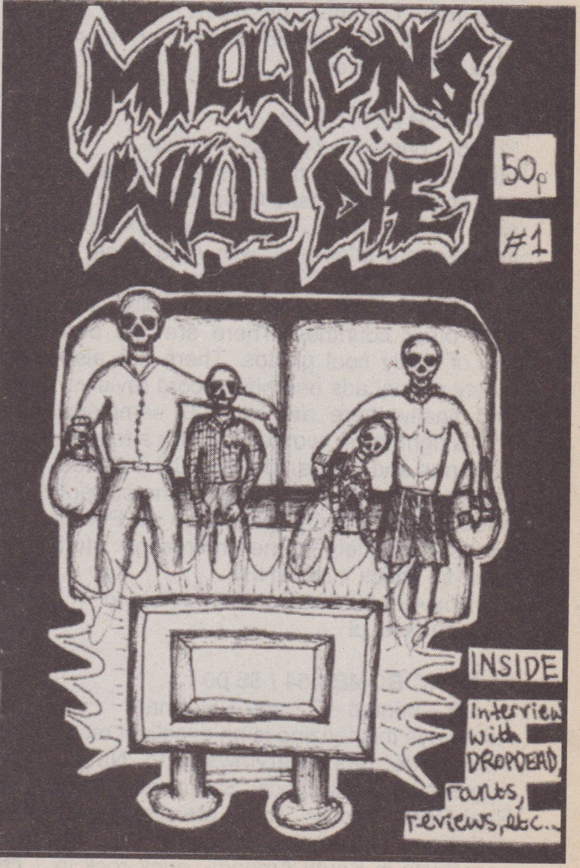
IN VALID #4 / free or trade
5.75 x 7.75 – copied – 48 pgs
Neighbourhood Swine is the only punk band in here, and they're stoked on Rancid so whatever. There is a two page comic in which zombies dance to 45 Grave; otherwise the focus is on art, online comics, shitty high schools, stuff like that. Actually, if you are in high school, like art, and haven't read a million zines then probably you'd like this. How the fuck they're gonna mail out free zines from Queensland, I dunno. This isn't really a punk zine, but still a good effort with some quality and character. You can read back issues on the Internet. (JM)
PO Box 1412 / Toowoomba, QLD / 4350 / Australia
www.invalidzine.com

KISS MACHINE #12 / $5 ppd
7 x 8.5 – printed – 80 pgs
It's always the kind of college–y artsy zines that have a theme. This issue's theme is "Revolution." There are bits and pieces of interesting writing in here, such as the piece on secret societies or about confronting a sexual harasser who is a member of one's community and subculture. This zine, however, was marred by several self–indulgent or boring essays that could not maintain my interest. Then there are the several poems and annoying contributor bios. (MD)
PO Box 108 / Station P / Toronto ON / Canada M5S 2S8
www.kissmachine.org

LAZY BONES #5 / ?
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 32 pages
A half personal and half comic zine that deals with college life, relationships, stories, etc. Not my kinda thing but at least the comics were well drawn. Call me morbid but I liked best the dead pool list, which included people like Mary-Kate Olsen, Wilford Brimley, and Roger Ebert. Sadly, they got points for Richard Pryor (RIP, dude). (NM)
Marc Parker / 2000 NE 42nd Ave #221 / Portland, OR 97213

MILLIONS WILL DIE #1 / $3
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 20 pgs
Three London teens ranging from age 14 to age 17 put together this anarcho zine, which features a short interview with Brian from Dropdead, a handful of record reviews, some musings on the pros and cons of religion, a piece about how television isn't cool, and another about the failings of the middle classes. Not a particularly sophisticated zine, but a very hearts-in-the-right-places effort nonetheless. I hope these young punx keep learning and questioning the world around them, and send us their future efforts in zine-making. (GN)
66 Northcroft Rd / Ealing, London / W139SX / United Kingdom

THE MOON CONSPIRACY #3 / $2 or trade
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 60 pgs
This zine ain't bad. It's big and packed with interesting reading material, and bound with a rubber band! An excellent interview with our own STRAIGHT EDGE KEGGER and a home brew recipe. It's not all entertaining and there seems to be some filler, but for the most part the writing is good and the interviews are original. (CQ)
1675 Hunters Run Dr. / Orleans, ON / K1C 6Z6 / Canada



NEW ORLEANS...MY LOVE / $2 ppd
4.25 x 5.5 – copied – 48 pgs
If you or someone you know was in NOLA during the hurricane, or helped with rescue efforts afterwards, this zine is for you. If you weren't there, this zine is still for you. Shelley tells her story of the storm, evacuating and then returning home. For some of us, it has been all too easy to forget about how the hurricane affected the city, the people and the animals there. But it is important to read of others experiences of survival and rebuilding, and remember, it's never too late to do something to help. (MD)
PO Box 791303 / New Orleans, LA / 70179

OX FANZINE #64 / $ 8.00
11 x 8 – printed – 140 pgs – German
As always, this fanzine is loaded with punk rock. Included in this issue are interviews with such bands or individuals as Danko Jones, Jack Endino, Lagwagon, Hell Is For Heros, X-Mist Records, American Eyes, Warlocks, Tiger Lou, Fall of Troy, and many others. Also included is an extensive list of new record reviews including some issued on major labels. There are also movie, book, and fanzine reviews, as well as gig reviews. Finally there are plenty of ads, columns and articles on politics. Definitely this fanzine is a must for anyone interested in the German scene. And of course this fanzine always comes with its complimentary CD sampler featuring the bands covered in the current issue. (HH)
PO Box 102225 / 42766 Haan / Germany
www.ox-fanzine.de

PASAZER #21 / $7.00
11 x 8 – printed – 148 pgs – Polish
Wow, what a great cover this fanzine has—very colorful. This issue is loaded with punk rock. What else would one expect? Included are interviews with Asta Kask, 7 Seconds, Vitamin X, Kevin K, and Madball, plus plenty of other bands both Polish and from other countries. There are lots and lots of really cool photos. There are also plenty of cool ads and new record reviews. And finally there are two CD samplers. That's right folks, two free CDs for a total of 45 songs and bands. The first CD includes mostly the bands highlighted in the current issue. The second CD features all Polish bands. Definitely some interesting stuff here, so check it out. (HH)
PO Box 42 / 39-201 Debica 3 / Poland
www.pasazer.pl

PLASTIC BOMB #54 / $6.00
11 x 8 – printed – 72 pgs – German
As always this fanzine is an excellent read. This issue has interviews with Naked Aggression, Lost Lyrics, Sado-Nation and Real Deal Records. There are also plenty of interesting articles including one on anarchists in South America, punk rock in Munich, herstory of punk, and the Linz scene. There are also plenty of cool ads, record reviews and other bits of information worth knowing. Finally this fanzine comes with its usual free CD sampler, this one containing 31 songs by such bands as US Bombs, Vageenas, Bombshell, etc... (HH)
Postfach 100205 / D-47002 Duisburg / Germany
www.plastic-bomb.de

POOR AND FORGOTTEN #24 / $1, stamps, or trade
3 x 5.5 – copied – 6 pgs
This is a really cool, well-written prisoner zine. He had the master copy of the zine taken in an unexpected room raid by the Sheriff's department so this one was put together in a rush from scraps and notes I think. It looks really cool, it's laid-out on one large page then folded to make a quarter size zine, so it's kind of like reading a folded up poster. There's an article about prison tattoos, how the guns are put together DIY style from D batteries and toothbrushes, with wire from the inner workings of a walkman used as a make shift needle. It made me think about how prisons are used to contain society's rejects, who in turn use their own refuse to form new and useful objects and how trash takes on different meanings and values. That sounds so corny, sorry dudes. The piece on the guy that was recycling someone's used chewing tobacco and selling it as rolling tobacco was pretty amazing too. I liked how he put a list of his favourite songs round the outside edge of the zine, calling it a "silent mix tape"—this was definitely my favorite zine I got to review this issue. (LG)
PO Box 59 / Linwood, MA 01525

PROFANE EXISTENCE 50– 51 / $10 each
8.5 x 11 – printed – 196 pgs.
Wow, this is the most packed issue of *PE* I have ever seen. In fact, it's a double issue! Interviews with Imperial Leather and @patia No, a Nausea tour diary, reports from Clit Fest ' 05, Nicaragua, a report about La Negra, and a Skuld Records 15 year retrospective. There are also reviews and the other standard *PE* fare. It also comes with a compilation of Skuld Records bands. If you have never read *Profane Existence* before now is the time. (CQ)
PO Box 8722 / Minneapolis, MN / 55408

PUDD'NHEAD #2 / $3 US / $6 World
8 x 11 – copied – 30 pgs
A slice of anarcho pie fresh from Minneapolis. It's a Mayday 2006–Mayday 2007 calendar with an anarcho word of the day/historical anecdote, with some lyrics from fitting punk songs at the end of each week. It was kind of too much to take in one sitting to be honest with you, but it's got a charming home made folksy quality to it and obviously took a lot of work and time to create...so...a calendar by the punks for the punks. It's like a punk SAT memory card series or something. (LG)
PO Box 7458 / Minneapolis, MN 55407

REBEL STEW #3 / free, trade, or donation
7.75 x 10 – printed – 48 pgs
For the price, this publication is awfully sweet. There is a focus on militarism, including reports of combating recruiting. This is a hard job in many places, but Northern Virginia in particular is an epicenter of right wing shitheels. The editor tells of being beaten up and arrested for flyering a recruiting table, and details similar stories from other college campuses. Much of the content is reprinted or summarized from other sources, and this is done in a readable and informative way. Another editor looks at history taught from a white perspective, and how white students have a hard time recognizing this. Plenty of other anti-authoritarian/anarchist writing appears as well. Hopefully, some people well include some cash when writing so that the zine can continue to come out. (JM)
PO Box 2351 / Falls Church, VA 22042

SHORT, FAST + LOUD! #15 / $3.50 US, $7.50 world
8.5 x 11 – printed – 96 pgs
More reports from the extreme hardcore front by the folks at *SF+L*. You are surely familiar with the rules by now: If it's short, fast, and loud (or long, slow, and loud), they'll cover it. This issue includes interviews with Municipal Waste, Vivisick, Weekend Nachos, and LA's Headline Records, the usual columns and features, and more reviews than a small city has phone listings. In general, *SF+L* has a good balance of nostalgia ("Gimme 5" article, "Blasts from the Past" column) and forward-looking material ("Teen Beat"), and despite the occasional inferiority complex with regards to "hip scenester" zines like the one you're holding, is essential reading for those who want to stay in touch with the modern hardcore scene. (CS)
225 Lincoln Ave. / Cotati, CA 94931
www.sixweeksrecords.com

SKYSCRAPER #21 / $5 ppd
8.5 x 11 – printed – 132 pgs
Skyscraper always seems like a little out of place for review here. It's very slick, and has band "features" (in addition to interviews) that read right off a promo sheet. The music covered is mostly on the indie rock side of things (Mogwai, Rah Brahs, John Wilkes Booze, Aids Wolf, Tristeza, Destroyer, etc). There are loads of ads and reviews, mostly for indie rock with the occasional punk record thrown in for good measure. (MD)
PO Box 4432 / Boulder, CO / 80306
www.skyscrapermagazine.com

SLINGSHOT #90 / free
11 x 17 – printed – 24 pgs
Run out of the Long Haul, Berkeley's own

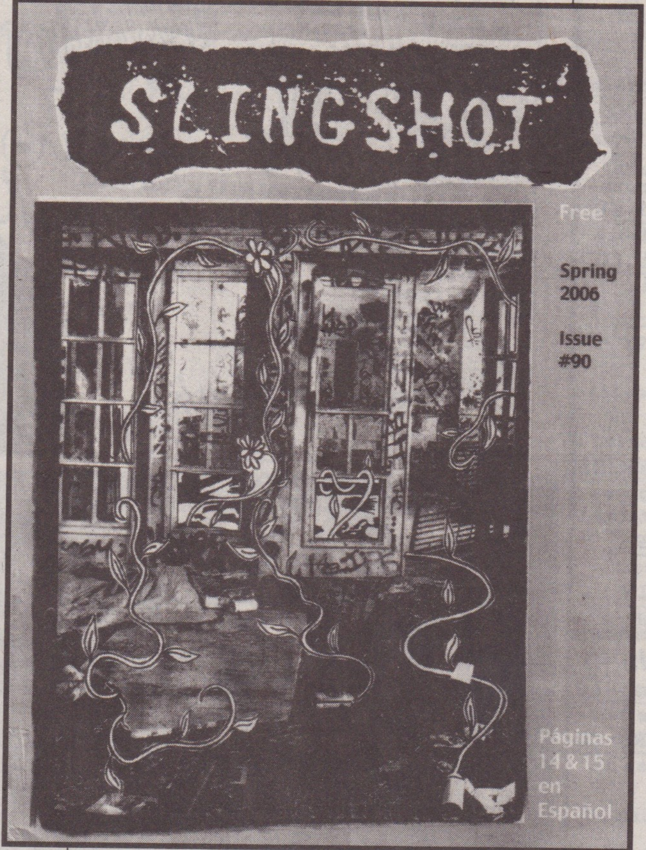
radical infoshop, *Slingshot* has been at it for a while and keeps plugging away with issue #90 of their anarcho newsletter. This zine is aesthetically more together (I probably think this 'cause it looks kind of punk) than the average anarcho newsletter, and is as always full of informative, progressive stories and ideas. (GN)
Long Haul / 3124 Shattuck Ave. / Berkeley, CA 94705

SQUART #? / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
Squat + Art = *Squart. Squart* is an art show in a squat. I remember an old David Cross routine where he said that art exhibited in an airport might as well be displayed "inside a bum's asshole," because really, who's looking at art in an airport, right? Well, I am writing Mr. Cross a letter tomorrow! Dude, a squat? I mean I'm all for art, in all its sundry forms, but an art show in a squat has a rather limited audience, and I think when you show art, I think you should try to really, you know, *show it,* to as many people as you possibly can. I think art shows in squats and zines about art shows in squats are for whoever is doing them and a few of their close friends. (AS)
Squart / PO Box 436 / Waldo, FL 32694

THRASH IT AWAY #2 / $4.00
8 x 6 – printed – 44 pgs – German
This fanzine has the usual punk fanzine layout. There are columns, interviews with the bands Sick Terror and Black Friday, and reports on the Fluff Fest Summer camp and the Pollution band tour in France and Spain. There are articles on the Aachen Four trial and the anti-racism movement, which are important after the recent beating of a black man in Leipzig by some Nazi skinheads. There are also plenty of new record reviews, mostly of bands not familiar to the US audience. Overall this is an excellent fanzine especially for anyone who wants to know more about the punk scene in Berlin, one of the coolest cities in the world. (HH)
Andreas Knobloch / Warschauer Str. 57 / 10243 Berlin / Germany
email:thrashxbastard@yahoo.de

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #195 / trade
8 x 6 – printed – 32 pgs – Finnish
This issue has an interview with the band Uhreja Kuten Me Kaikki and a tour report of the band Ristisaatto in Russia and Belarussia. There are some ads and some record reviews. There are also plenty of lists of the best releases of 2005. That would be interesting for any record collector who is into Finnish punk and hardcore. This fanzine is definitely a great place to check out the Finnish scene. (HH)
PO Box 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland
www.punkinfinland.net/tv/english

TURNING THE TIDE vol 18, #3 / no price listed
17x11 – printed – 8 pgs
Overall good information about events going on that pertain to the activism. In this issue there is stuff about the anti–fascist movement and the "green scare." Extremely informative and good to read. (TW)
PO Box 1055 / Culver City, CA 90232
www.antiracistaction.us
antiracistaction_la@yahoo.com



TWO STOLEN SNAPSHOTS: THE "BRO-JOB CHRONICLES" / $3
2.5 x 3.5 – copied – 46 pgs
My fellow zine reviewer Andy and I had a conversation the other day about how doing zine reviews can be kind of depressing, because people seem to have such a narrow vision of the radical possibilities of what a zine can be. Like, how many *Cometbus*—or for that matter—*MRR* ripoffs do there need to be in the world? It is a rare zine that actually challenges you or shakes your perception in any way. *Snapshots* is a zine that has had different incarnations, and has been written by one editor with a command of many different voices; while I am never exactly sure of what to expect from Kat's writing, I know that I can always expect it to be good. This issue of her zine is broken up into two sections, both of which graphically deal with human frailty as filtered through the lens of sexuality. The first section, which is shorter, is an expansion on a poem by John Keats. It is a very intense and interesting re-imagining of the original work. The second is a short story that manages to somehow *not* be cliché, despite being about dudes, junkies, and sex. The mood of the story reminded me of reading Denis Johnson not only for some of the content but because of the way Kat's writing somehow elevates the banalities of her character's lives to have almost metaphysical significance without falling into the trap of romanticizing bullshit that doesn't deserve to be romanticized. The story was depressing to read, but moving as hell. Well done. (GN)
Snapshots / 225 San Jose Ave. / San Francisco, CA 94110
katchaos@gmail.com

UNDER THE VOLCANO #91 / $4
8.5 x 11 – printed – 55 pages
Long running slick punk mag, this issue with US Bombs, A Global Threat, Loved Ones, the Scarred, and the usual music, movie and zine reviews plus loads of big name label ads. I give 'em credit for longevity but most of this stuff is well-known stuff. I generally like to learn about lesser-known bands, maybe that's just me. (NM)
Under the Volcano / PO Box 236 / Nesconset, NY 11767

VERBICIDE #16 / $3.95
8.5 x 11 – printed – 90 pgs
I don't know who is making *Verbicide,* or why, and I don't care. It's not a zine and it doesn't have anything to do with punk. It's filled with pictures of bands with shaggy, indie-rock hairdos who look like they spent a lot of time deciding what facial expression they were going to use for their promo photo. Fuck this shit. (AS)
Scissor Press / PO Box 382 / Ludlow, VT 05149

XEROGRAPHY DEBT #19 / $3
5.5 x 8.5 – printed – 48 pgs
"The review zine with perzine tendencies." I cringed when I read that too but actually, that's a pretty good combo. You get to read reviews that are well thought out and interesting, and that are more than five sentences long, so you get to know the reviewer. But you don't have to read a bunch of emo crushed out stuff either, like in many perzines. Great! (TW)
Davida Gypsy Breier / PO Box 11064 / Baltimore, MD 21212
www.leekinginc.com
Dacida@leekinginc.com

SIX TWO FIVE

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IRON LUNG/SHANK - Split CD
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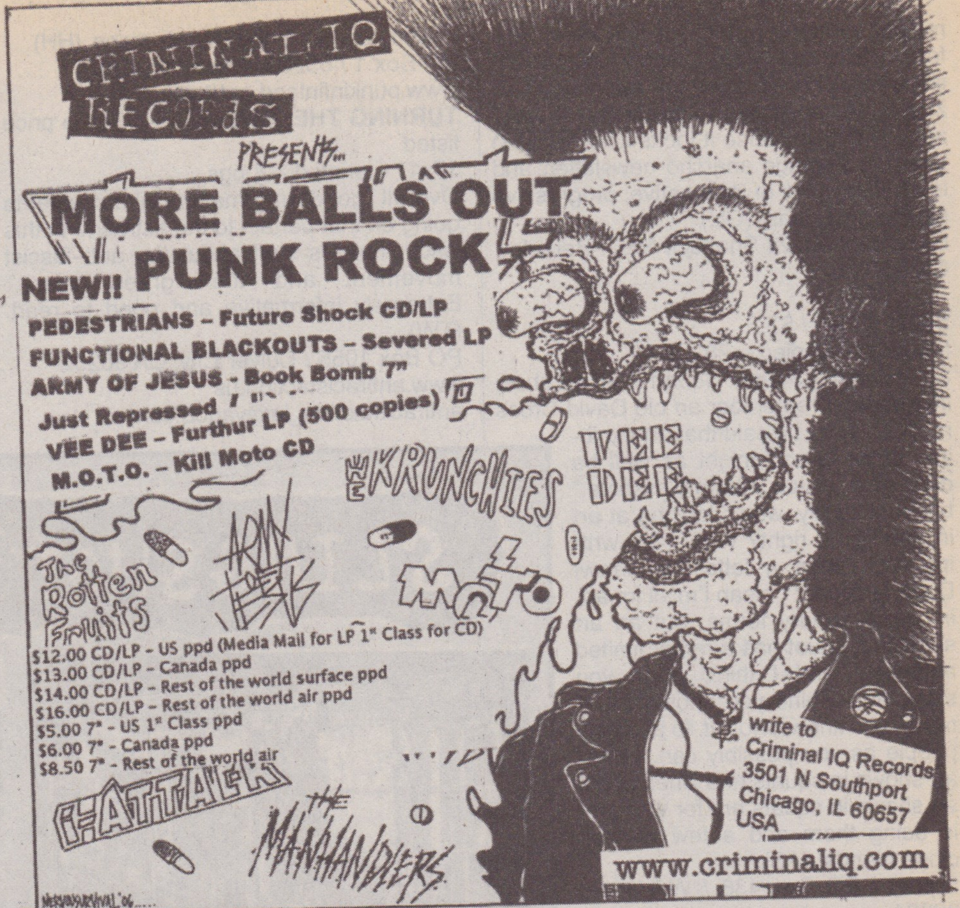

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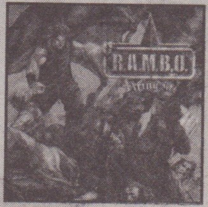

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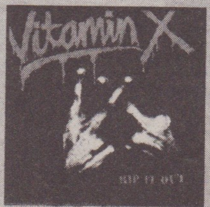

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GOVERNMENT ISSUE 1982

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